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MAR 9 '17

Contributions by **Horatio Bottomley, H. C. Ferraby, "Taffrail," Elsie Scott, Mrs. Stanley Wrench, etc.**

The April # ROYAL

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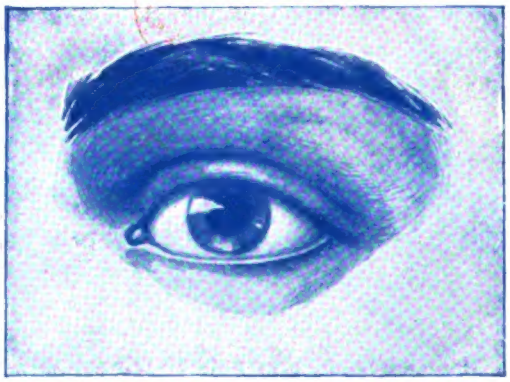
WISDOM



TAKE

BEECHAM'S PILLS

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Photo *Elwin Neame.*

Now wardrobes are limited it is not always easy to choose the right costume for every occasion. Turn to page 511 and read "The Right Rig-Out," in which Miss Elsie Scott, the charming young actress, gives some golden hints as to the choice of clothes both for indoor and outdoor wear.

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Photo *Rita Martin.*

Miss Elsie Scott, who scored such a triumph in *Houp-là*, as the Hon. Diana Datchet, one of the beautiful girls who flutter so charmingly about the hero of the play.

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The Right Rig-Out

By Elsie Scott.

"Suit your costume to the occasion," is the motto of every woman who aspires to be considered well dressed. In the following article Miss Elsie Scott, who made such a success in *Houp-là* at the St. Martin's Theatre, gives her opinion as to the frills and furbelows most suited to grace the various happenings that make up the sum of our days.—Ed. R.M.)

Suitability is the keynote to success in dress, but, unhappily, a great many worthy people go through life without realising this golden fact. So, even in these enlightened days, we see the amazing spectacle of girls tramping the country lanes and fields in fluffy muslin frocks and high-heeled shoes, or trudging the London streets in a pitiless downpour, clad in thin silk costumes and flower-trimmed hats.

With our present limited wardrobes it is more than ever necessary that every frock and costume shall have a definite mission in life, since indiscriminate buying is now one of the seven deadly sins, and the choice of new apparel a matter for prayer and fasting.

There are people who accumulate clothes in a haphazard manner, buying anything that takes their fancy without any regard to the present contents of their wardrobe. This type of girl will cheerfully sport a Panama hat with a taffeta silk dress and wear

Photo *Elwin Neame.*

Sports Coat by Pam, New Bond Street.

For country wear Miss Scott considers there is nothing like a short skirt and a sports coat of some cheery colour like the orange one she is wearing.

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grey shoes and stockings with a costume that calls obviously for nigger-brown. She never has a complete rig-out, and her colour schemes are of the futurist order and exceedingly deadly. What she does not realise is that it is better to have two or three decent outfits all in keeping from hat to shoes than a scrappy collection of assorted garments, none of which can be becomingly wedded to another.

I always think that for very cold weather there's nothing to beat a fur coat, or, failing that, a velvet one trimmed with fur. Rabid dress economists, who would have us disfigure the landscape by going about in antique garments, may lift up their hands in horror, but if you can afford the outlay, a coat of this sort is not really an extravagance. You see, it serves so many purposes. Clad in a fur coat you can walk abroad serenely in the coldest weather, while if an occasional motor-trip comes your way, there you are all ready equipped! Moreover—and this is a great point—you can wear it as an evening wrap and so look the whole world in the face when *he* comes home on leave and pilots you to a restaurant dinner or the theatre.

Nightgown, etc., by Pam, New Bond Street.

Photo *Elwin Neame.*

Before economy was the order of the day Zeppelin outfits were not unknown, and with misplaced confidence in the English climate some fair damsels invested in the daintiest nightgowns and boudoir caps as suitable attire should a night alarm occur.

Even in war-time one cannot dwell perpetually in a blouse and skirt and keep one's self-respect. Personally, I think a pretty house-frock is far the comfiest thing to wear on the rare occasions when one has time to snatch a few hours among one's own chintz and china. If you're a worker at a canteen or hospital, or doing any work that compels you to wear uniform, you'll appreciate a becoming frock all the more. The mere *swish* of the silk as you put it on will freshen you up, and you will straightway forget there are such things as swabs and eggs and bacon and sausages awaiting you on the morrow, and in the pleasure of the moment find rest unto your soul.

Evening dress has, as it were, retreated temporarily into the background, but there are occasions to which nothing else will do justice. The Army and the Navy deserve the best of everything, and during their brief sojourns in Blighty we all like to turn out in purple and fine linen in their honour. So the evening dress still pops up at theatres and restaurants generally companioned by khaki or navy blue, and refuses to be entirely suppressed for all the wailings of the "no-new-clothes" brigade.

For country wear I don't think there's anything to beat a short skirt and a sports coat. I think the man—or was it a woman?—who invented sports coats ought to have a monument built to his memory, for they are so cosy, and, better still, so becoming. Give me a sports coat of some bright, cheery colour, a skirt to match, and I'm not only as happy as a queen, but feel I'm doing a good work

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Frock and tea-gown by Pam, New Bond Street.

For cold weather this house frock of black velvet trimmed with gold is wholly charming——

Photos, Elwin Neame.

——while a velvet coat with fur collar and cuffs is equally useful. The tea-gown of green chiffon and gold lace, with its sash of periwinkle blue, is the very thing to slip on in leisure moments.

into the bargain by decorating the landscape!

The advent of Zeppelin raids furnished a good excuse in the minds of some excellent people for purchasing outfits in which, if necessity demanded, they might face a midnight alarm without a tremor as to their appearance. With touching confidence in the English climate, many maidens invested in *negligées* of silk or *crêpe-de-Chine*, and with boudoir caps to match felt themselves, as far as dress went, armed to the teeth. Sometimes their most careful preparations were doomed, however, as was the case with a girl friend of mine, whom I will call Eva.

Eva was nineteen, decidedly pretty, and of the type that looks best in disarray. Moreover, she lived on the East Coast, a combination of circumstances that promised interesting developments. With admirable forethought Eva acquired a *negligée* and boudoir cap of palest shell pink cunningly embroidered with forget-me-nots, and, thus provided, awaited the advent of possible Zeps and the arrival of Lieutenant Smartly, R.N., who was due on a visit.

With the true gallantry of the Navy Lieutenant Smartly devoted himself to Eva, but—he also devoted himself and with equal thoroughness to Eva's cousin, Mavis, who had come for a month's visit. Mavis had her full share of beauty, and Eva, who was a shrewd young person for all her golden hair and speedwell eyes, realised that pretty clothes were the one weapon she owned which was denied to her cousin. So she yearned for a Zep

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raid, since Lieutenant Smartly could not but yield to the charms of the pink outfit, especially when seen side by side with the blue cotton-*crêpe* kimono which was Mavis' only corresponding possession.

The Zep came, and, awakened by the sound of guns, Eva flew out of bed and darted to the cupboard for the treasured *negligée* and cap. They were not there—Eva's things never were in their appointed place !—and in a frenzy she pulled out drawers and ransacked boxes, only to remember that she had left them in Mavis' room, that obliging young person having promised to iron out the ribbons which had become crushed.

Eva rushed to her cousin's room, pulling on a faded mauve kimono as she ran, but she drew a blank, for there was no trace of her treasures there. Down in the hall she heard Mavis' voice, and tore down the stairs, nearly colliding with Lieutenant Smartly, who was coming up to fetch her.

As for the *negligée* she had no need to demand its whereabouts, for standing in the hall was Mavis holding its pink folds about her, and looking distractingly pretty with the boudoir cap crowning her dusky hair.

"I just took the first thing that came," she explained ingenuously, at which Eva collapsed on the bottom step and sulked, while the young officer hovered about Mavis with admiration on his sunburnt face.

It is hardly necessary to record that the one thing Mavis insisted on having in her trousseau was a shell-pink *negligée* embroidered with forget-me-nots.

I think war-work has taught some people the necessity of suiting their costume to the occasion, for many girls who would cheerfully have pottered about the kitchen at home in unprotected frocks are now helping at canteens or buffets, where practical aprons or overalls are compulsory. "No sensible girl would do cooking or dusting without wearing an apron," you say? Well, perhaps not, but that is just the point—before the war there were a great many girls with no pretensions to commonsense, girls who, if permitted, would have dispensed tea and sandwiches to hungry "Tommies" clad in silk blouses and pearls, but who, having adopted the sensible and becoming uniform insisted upon, will know better than to take liberties with their clothes when engaged in housework.

After all if you're working, why not *look* workmanlike? Take the business girl, for instance! A well-cut skirt and neat but dainty blouse, or perhaps a

Photo *Rita Martin.*

An evening frock can hardly be reckoned an extravagance provided it is quite simple, and, after all, our fighting men do like to see something festive when they come home on leave.

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plain coat-frock are the things for her. As a girl friend of mine, who is secretary to a *very* great man—no, I can't tell you his name—said to me: "Some of them, especially the 'tempys' *will* wear high heels and necklaces and frilly blouses. They look like cheap imitations of the musical-comedy business girl, who's very fetching on the stage, but absolutely impossible in a real office."

This cherry-coloured velvet frock, with its quaint touch of embroidery on the back, could be worn at home or for semi-evening——

It was this girl, too, who confided to me that some business girls of her acquaintance apparently regarded the office as a place in which to wear out their old finery. They evidently bought all their clothes with an eye to their various junketings, forgetting that it is every bit as bad form to go about their daily work clad in fluffy and bedraggled blouses as it would be to attend a garden party in a tweed costume and flannel shirt.

Oh, I know I'm not a business girl, but this chum of mine *is*, and I'm sure there's lots of wisdom in what she says. That's why I'm passing on her remarks along with my own comments on the right rig-out for those occasions of which I *do* know something.

You see, you can always put on a fluffy frock when you get home, and unless you've tried it, you've no idea how refreshing it is to get out of the kit you've worn all day and decorate the fireside in something soft and frilly. Your business worries will drop away from you, and you'll be much more amiable than if you were still enveloped in the blue serge of a blameless day.

Clothes mean so much to a girl, and the knowledge that you are looking your best will have a marvellous effect on your spirits, and contribute greatly to your popularity at home.

Photos *Elsie Neame.*

Gown by Pum, New Bond Street.

——and would be voted "topping" by any fighting man lucky enough to act as escort to its wearer.

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Does an Heroic Death Wipe Out Past Misdeeds?

By
HORATIO BOTTOMLEY.

To many a fighting man whose past has not been altogether blameless, the war has given an opportunity of supreme atonement. In the following article Mr. Horatio Bottomley contends that a soldier who dies heroically, wipes out by his glorious death all past sins, that "in a moment of matchless glory he has made his peace with God."

Photo *J. Russell & Sons.*

Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the author of the following powerful article.

SOME of our leading divines have lately been canvassing the propriety of "prayers for the dead." Should we beseech a merciful Heaven to have pity upon our fallen heroes? Should we invoke the compassion of God upon the souls of our unreturning brave?

Personally, I am bound to confess that all such questions savour to me of blasphemy. "Mercy", for the noblest heroes the world has ever seen! "Pity," for men who have scaled the loftiest peaks of moral grandeur! Yet I suppose no insult is intended. Perhaps the preachers are merely trying to express a natural human speculation which I prefer to state without the entanglements of dogma—does an heroic death wipe out past misdeeds?

Our New Moral Standards.

Remember that the war has achieved a revolution in the moral standards of the race. The lightnings of Armageddon have blazed a shining trail of glory, opening up new vistas of moral splendour, while casting into lurid relief the deeps of human iniquity. By their chivalry and valour, by their single-hearted devotion to duty, by the beauty of their sacrifice, the gallant Knights of Freedom have taught us the true nature of manly virtue, while the savage Hun has displayed in blood-red characters the alphabet of crime.

The Cleanest Soldiery in Europe.

Before the war—to be quite candid—we were a little inclined to be namby-pamby in our popular notions of right and wrong. All sorts of comparatively harmless things were denounced as "evils" and proscribed as "sins." But the keen actuality of war has left no room for shams. Our boys are not plaster saints—they hate to be elevated on to a moral pedestal; they have an awkward habit of pretending to vices with which in fact they have no more than a nodding acquaintance. Yet, when all is said, these khaki lads of ours are the cleanest soldiery in Europe. Kitchener's "New Model" is the nearest approach to an army of pure chivalry that the world is likely to see.

But, of course, there are "black sheep" among them—boys who had run a little wild at home, men with blotted records, who might have found it cruelly hard to

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"make good" in any civil occupation. They were the Ishmaels of our peace-time society; it seemed as though the Nemesis of perhaps a single misdeed would dog their footsteps to an unhonoured grave. Then came the war—and opportunity.

A Chance to "Make Good."

To many a man, fettered by the chains of a dubious past, it has been given in these stirring days to "beat the blows of circumstance and grapple with his evil star." Some day, perhaps, the history of these grand deliverances may be made known. Already we know enough to set us thinking and to teach us to wear with all humility the phylacteries of our own stainless virtue.

At least one gallant hero with what is vaguely known as "a criminal record" wears the V.C. upon his khaki tunic. Would you feel less honoured to grasp his hand, less inclined to raise your hat to him, because on an earlier page of his chequered history there was a black mark—a police-court conviction, a sentence of imprisonment? "It all depends," you think. There are some crimes too black for expiation. Yes, yes—but in *that* degraded sense this brave lad of ours was no criminal. Not even the wondrous alchemy of war could transmute the base metal into the pure gold of flawless valour. This was perhaps a little affair of property, a kick or two over the traces of our severe social conventions, a slight confusion between *meum* and *tuum*—nothing essentially depraved or vile.

And now our hero is returning from the war with the Cross of Valour on his breast! Can you abstain from homage? Of course not, and in the same way in the Divine Audit that single act of sublime, selfless heroism may count for more than all your own impeccable virtue.

Give Him Your Homage.

Do not fall into the folly of the Pharisee. Perhaps, after all, it is partly timidity that has kept you so strictly to the paths of rectitude. True, you wear the white flower of a blameless life, but that modest decoration is not fit to compare with the glowing splendour of the proud Cross—the Cross of Valour—yes, and as I strongly hold, the Cross of Atonement. So be careful how you judge—in these infinite matters it is so easy to be wrong.

In many cases, of course, there is no military decoration, no fervent welcome home—maybe just a valiant fight against odds and a soul sped to eternity; some act of sublime devotion, unobserved and unrecorded, save upon the Tablets of Heaven; an act of simple duty faithfully discharged, and caught up in a cloud of glory, a humble soldier reports himself to the Captain of All Brave Souls. Are his misdeeds to be brought up against him? Are his sins to be numbered? Are his records to be searched? Or is he to be freely welcomed to the Valhalla of Valour—crowned with the franchises of the City of Light?

I don't know whether any of my readers still cling to a primitive notion of the Deity as a jealous, vengeful Potentate, swift to punish and slow to pardon, to be worshipped in fear and trembling. I had hoped that this ugly creed was dead for ever, that it had made way for a sweeter, purer Faith. Surely no such wild distortion of eternal Truth can survive the revealing shock of war? Such coarse heresies are a terrible travesty of true religion—a blasphemy against the very Spirit of God.

The Passport to His Presence.

If the God of Battles lives, then surely valour in a righteous cause is a passport to His presence? If somewhere beyond the bounds of time and space there is a Heavenly City, then surely our dead heroes are treading the pavements, erect, in the full glory of their splendid manhood—not dead, but the guests of God till we too pass out into the light?

Past histories, earthly lapses, blotted pages in the book of life—well, what of them? "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." And remember that, whatever his faults, each man has been given the opportunity of supreme atonement. In a moment of matchless glory he has made his peace with God. For it was in that hour of fierce testing that the man's true character was revealed and his "soul" exalted.

You remember how, in "A Tale of Two Cities," the reckless, dissolute Sydney Carton finally bends his neck to the guillotine in place of another, and the stirring words in which the warm humanity of Charles Dickens has clothed the dying thoughts of his hero: "I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous, and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. . . . I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts and in the hearts of their descendants generations hence."

Away with Puny Standards!

Dare we withhold this gentle sanctuary, this full-hearted benediction, from any man who, for our sakes, for the sake of our women and children, for the sake of all that is dear to us, has gone cheerfully to his death upon the field of war? Are we to judge these

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matchless heroes by the puny standards of human ethics? Should we not rather leave their valiant souls in the keeping of Eternal Justice, and cherish their memories as spiritual heirlooms—part and parcel of the glorious heritage of an emancipated race?

The Question of Immortality.

Let me get back to my own theory as enunciated in my recent article "Are They Really Dead?" which appeared in the February ROYAL. It is peculiarly applicable to my present theme. My main purpose then was to establish the immortality of the human "soul" in all cases except those of the lower, nebulous forms of life. Starting with the assumption that "the universe is permeated by an ocean of Vital Force—Life Fluid—which is ever flying into and out of (at birth and death) *every* living thing—vivifying, magnetising it according to its receptivity," I took the example of an Ethiopian married couple and the birth of a little pickaninny, by whose magnetism a sufficient amount of necessary vitalising fluid to give it life and being was attracted; and I then suggested that when the magnet gave out—in other words, when the Ethiopian died—its "soul" flew back, *unaltered*, into the great Sea of Life.

I then compared this condition of things with the case of a human being, higher in the scale of evolution, whose conscious acts, either good or evil, operated upon the quality of what the Buddhists would call its *karma* (I prefer the simpler word "soul"), refining or degrading its quality before its release at what we call death; and, proceeding upon this theory, I said: "But since the Divine purpose is ever towards exaltation, there is one thing, and one thing only, which insures Conscious Life after Death—the ennoblement of the Soul by Love and Sacrifice to such a degree that once liberated from its mortal prison it is of too high a quality to blend with the common ocean, and roams about in search of an Affinity—which it finds in those who were dearest to it in life, and for whom primarily the love and the sacrifice were given."

"Greater Love Hath No Man——"

Now apply that conception of Life and Death to our present problem—does "great sacrifice" in a heroic and righteous cause, wipe out past misdeeds? Can you doubt it? There is nothing like going back to the early days of the world, before we were all so "educated" and wise, for a glimpse of fundamental truths in all matters of what is called religion. Take the words attributed to Christ—and which are to be found in the sacred books of older religions than Christianity: "Greater love hath no man than this—that he lay down his life for his brother."

There you have it in one fine sentence. Every hero of this war who has fallen on the field of battle has performed an act of Greatest Love, so penetrating and intense in its purifying character that I do not hesitate to express my belief that any and every past sin is automatically wiped out from the record of his life.

Guests of the God of Battles.

Let every relative, therefore, of every fallen soldier take comfort—and of every wounded soldier, too. These men have passed through the furnace of moral re-birth and regeneration. They who have crossed over have cleared their lives from all stain, and are to-day the honoured and welcome guests of the great God of Battles—waiting and ever watching for the re-union with their dear ones which, so long as *they* remain worthy, is "sure and certain." On the other hand, it rests with those who, though scarred and bruised and broken in the war, have not been called over, to start a new chapter, knowing that all past ones have been made clean by their sacrifice. I tried to express this view in my own war verses, "Why is the Red Blood Flowing?" when I said:

"Come, comrade, we must answer;
And let our answer be:
'Why is the red blood flowing?'
To chasten you and me.
That surely is the message,
So let us bow the head—
God cheer the weeping women;
God bless the silent dead.
And from this very moment
We'll open a fresh page—
Record our resolution
The birth of this new age—
To prove our aim and purpose
That, too, will be the test—
To make this world we live in
Of all the worlds the best."

I don't suppose it is very good poetry, and for all I know or care the "feet" and metre and all the rest of it may be wrong, but I venture to believe that it conveys a great moral lesson—even a great religious truth.

Atonement Through Suffering.

They who have fallen in battle—fighting consciously for the Right, are now with the Immortals—though their "sins" were as scarlet, their "souls" are white as snow, and they who have suffered, and are suffering, have been granted a new passport for the realms of Mystery which lie beyond the final milestone on the road of human destiny. Let them keep it clean and unabused and all will be well.

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So come, "sinners" all—not on your knees at the stool of "repentance," but straight to the battlefield—erect, manly, resolute—to join in the great Fight which shall not only rid the world of the devilish monster of iniquity, who has been haunting it ever since the Mad Monarch of Europe came to the throne, but will, at the same time, automatically give you your Permit to enter what can be expressed in no better words than the "Kingdom of Heaven."

Comfort for Those who Mourn.

Such are my deep and sincere convictions on this solemn problem, and if they afford even a grain of comfort to the bereaved I am, indeed, well rewarded. At any rate, I am honest in the expression of my faith; he would be a false friend to his country who wrote lightly on such sacred things, and I would rather my hand were struck with palsy than do so. I do not pretend to *know* —the man who does is a hypocrite or a crank. But these things have been in my mind for many years—and the war has brought them out.

God grant I may prove to be right—if only for the sake of those bereft of their dear ones by this tragedy of blood and tears.

("Why Not a Woman's House of Parliament?" is the title of Mr. Bottomley's contribution in next month's ROYAL. The subject is a vital one. Mr. Bottomley has done full justice to it, and the result is an article of supreme and absorbing interest.)

BREEZES.

When Clarinda, lithely lang'rous, dawdles thro' the dreamy dance,
While the wallflowers droop forlornly, and my rivals glare askance,
As I watch the dimples playing near her madd'ning, mystic mouth,
All the world's divine and tender, and the wind is in the south.

When Clarinda, softly stepping, in the old rose-garden strays,
And I see the blossoms shining thro' a gleaming, golden haze;
While our hearts beat time together in that dim retreat of rest,
Swift she sways to my entreating, and the wind is in the west.

When Clarinda, swiftly striding, plays a stunning round of golf,
And I watch the witching wonder of her poise in driving off,
When, by "wanton, wicked bungling!" I am forty *down* at least,
Oh, she wilts me to a wire-worm, and the wind is in the east.

When Clarinda goes a-skating in a kit all *comme il faut*,
And she's gracefully glissading, with her eyes and cheeks aglow;
As I shiver on the margin, far too faint to venture forth—
Oh, her icy gaze cuts thro' me, and the wind is in the north!

Anne Page.

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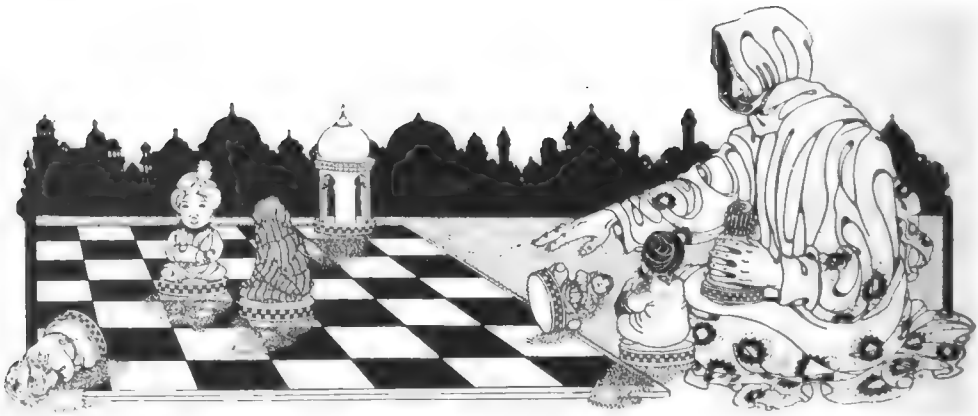

THE CHEQUER BOARD

By Margaret Pedler.

"'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days,
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays."

I.

"Of course, of course, Cecily. Do just as you like. You can always have the landaulette, you know."

Byron Gaunt, whom a turn in the current of political affairs had just carried safely into the harbour of an Under-Secretaryship, spoke abstractedly, fluttering meanwhile with seeking fingers the pile of papers—reports, digests of speeches and the like—which lay in front of him.

The table at which he sat was strewn with documents—filed here, neatly tied with pink tape there—parliamentary Blue Books and pages of memoranda—all the olla-podrida of a man of affairs, while the imposing, rather gloomy-looking library furnished an eminently suitable background for a rising statesman.

The woman who stood beside him, regarding him with an expression of petulant dissatisfaction in her gentian-blue eyes, seemed out of place in the ponderous atmosphere of the room. The soft, chiffony blue of her gown made a splash of delicate colour against its sombre walls, and a stray sunbeam, slanting in through the window and finding nothing else half so much to its liking, rested caressingly on her shining hair, turning it into a nimbus of gold. There was something very fresh and young about her; she might almost have stood for an embodiment of spring.

But Gaunt missed the picture altogether; instead, his eyes were roving amongst the litter of dull documents that signified so much to him.

Cecily's own eyes followed his eager glance, and her lips curved into a sarcastic little smile.

"But you?" she said protestingly. "You're coming with me to Lady Mallinson's dance? I accepted for us both."

"I?"—still in the same abstracted tones. "Oh, no, I can't come. Make my apologies, dear, will you? Say I'm overwhelmed with work—no time to call my own. You'll know what to say."

"You *never* go out with me now, Byron! I might as well not have a husband!"

The sudden passion in her voice arrested his attention. He ceased searching amongst his papers and swung round in his chair, lifting a pair of keen grey eyes to her face.

Her expression softened a little. He was very good to look at, this statesman-husband of hers, with his clear-cut, dominant features and greying hair that crinkled irresistibly into a wave where it was pushed back from the finely-shaped brow. And he carried his five-and-forty years well. It was only lately, since public business had monopolised

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so much of his attention, that she had realised the quarter of a century difference in their ages.

"Cecily"—he spoke kindly, but with unmistakable intention—"you must be sensible about this. I've reached the place where I now stand by sheer hard work, and if I'm to obtain my ultimate goal——"

"The Premiership?"

He nodded, a brief smile curving his thin, clever lips.

"Yes. If I'm to do that it will mean years more of even harder work. And work means time. You must not ask me to jeopardise my career in order to escort you here and there this winter. Of course, I shall go with you to the places that matter politically."

"But that would be merely for professional reasons—not in the least to please me," objected Cecily, taking a supremely feminine view of the matter.

Gaunt's face betrayed annoyance as his wife gave utterance to the bald truth.

"Really, Cecily, you mustn't be so childish. To please you! Do you imagine that I can spend my valuable time in just trying 'to please you,' as though you were some silly girl in her teens and I an equally foolish boy? It's unreasonable."

Cecily looked drearily out of the window, and her lip quivered. After all, it was only a year since she had said good-bye to her teens.

"No," she answered at last, slowly, "I don't suppose you could—spend your time trying to please me."

"That's right; that's sensible," agreed Gaunt heartily. Then, as the door of the adjoining room opened and his private secretary made his appearance, "Ah! Here's Blackford. Now, dear——" He looked vaguely round.

"I'm to go, that's it, isn't it?" said Cecily. "Fade away?" with a rather jerky laugh.

"Um—ah—well! I expect you've plenty to see to—shopping and so forth," Gaunt murmured apologetically. "Clothes, eh?"

"Yes, clothes," replied Cecily. "Of course, there are always—clothes to think about."

She turned and walked slowly out of the room, and five minutes later Gaunt and his secretary were immersed in the former's correspondence.

That evening Cecily attended the Mallinson's dance alone. She apologised prettily for her husband's absence, exchanged a few words with various acquaintances, and then, quite by chance apparently, encountered the insistent gaze of a pair of hazel eyes. Long, slumbrous eyes they were, but flecked with little tawny lights that betokened something more vital than their surface calm.

"Cecily!" The speaker's voice matched his eyes—a drawling, caressing voice with an underlying vibrant thrill in it, the sort of voice that ought to be labelled "Dangerous."

A faint flush tinged the delicate pallor of Cecily's face as together she and Humphrey Drake made their way into the scented warmth of the winter garden which adjoined the ball-room.

Overhead, rose-shaded burners shed a subdued light on the shining green of leaves, starred here and there with exotic blooms, while the soft splashing of a fountain came from somewhere behind a bank of ferns and mingled with the muted sound of the orchestra hidden in a gallery of the adjacent ball-room.

"So you came alone, after all?" There was a little hint of amusement in Drake's voice, a kind of "I told you so," as though the subject had been discussed between them before, and some prophecy of hers connected with it had failed to mature into fact.

Cecily turned her head aside.

"Yes," she admitted. "I came alone. I—I begged him to come with me."

"But why do you mind his remaining at home so much? I don't think most young married women are beset by such an inordinate craving for their husband's attendance!"

"I love him, you see," said Cecily simply. "And I used to think he cared for me in the same way."

"And now?" A sudden light woke in the tawny-hazel eyes.

"Now I see I count with him considerably less than—his secretary," she said bitterly. "He, at least, can help him in his career. I can't. So I'm of no importance—not in the least necessary to him."

Drake's strong, firm hand closed over both hers as they lay tightly clasped in her lap.

"There is someone else, Cecily, to whom you *are* necessary—someone to whom you mean everything in the whole world. Darling, leave it all and come away with me. I'll make you so happy. There's never a moment when I'm not wanting you—needing you, Cecily——"

"Oh, no, no, no! Don't ask me, Humphrey. I must—I must go through with it somehow."

"But why? If he doesn't care? And I do. I want you."

There was an impetuous masterfulness in his voice, and the woman in her thrilled in response to it.

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She rose, drawing her hands away from his clasp, her eyes rather frightened.

"Humphrey, if I came with you it would only be because I'm miserable at home, not because I love you," she said irresolutely.

"I don't care," he persisted eagerly. "You'd learn to care—I'd teach you. Oh, Cecily, Cecily, say you'll come!"

"No—no! I'll go on a bit longer. Perhaps some day he'll not be so absorbed in his work and we shall rub along better together. I suppose"—thoughtfully—"I am rather demanding, exacting—what he calls unreasonable." She smiled wanly. "But it's all so different from what I expected."

Drake looked down at her.

"Some day," he said slowly, "you'll come to me, Cecily. You'll get dead sick of it and then you'll come to me. I can wait; you'll always find me waiting. And now," with a sudden change of tone, "shall we go back to the ball-room and dance? At least there's no law against our dancing together."

Cecily laughed, and her face brightened with girlish pleasure as they emerged into the ball-room and floated away together over the excellent floor. She was devoted to dancing, finding in the rhythmic motion an outlet for the superabundant vitality of youth. And Byron didn't dance!

But, as she reflected, unlike some unreasonable husbands, he did not object to his wife's dancing with other men.

Rather proudly she drew Drake's attention to this evidence of his broad-mindedness. Drake regarded her curiously.

"Is that altogether a compliment on his part?" he suggested. "If you were *my* wife," and he held her a little closer in his arms as they swung down the big room together—"if you were *my* wife I should want to throttle any other man who danced with you."

And the hazel eyes with the dangerous warm glint in their tawny depths supplied the reason.

For the rest of the evening Cecily danced continuously, and more often than Mrs. Grundy quite approved her partner was Humphrey Drake. A little whisper crept about the room, just a suggestion that Byron Gaunt would do well to look after his wife more carefully. She was rather too young, and far too pretty, to be allowed quite so much latitude, opined the dowagers, who from their places against the wall kept lynx-eyed watch and ward.

But, had they only known it, all Cecily's enjoyment of the dance had been wiped out by Drake's comment on the liberty her husband accorded her. It had shown her Byron's attitude in a new light altogether—and a very undesirable one.

Hitherto, she had taken a pride in the fact that he trusted her so absolutely. Now she suddenly realised that there might be another and much less pleasing aspect to the matter. The freedom that he allowed her might be due to sheer indifference!

That was the suggestion which underlay Drake's words, and it bit into her mind, tallying horribly with the dread which had been lately creeping about her heart as each month public affairs seemed to absorb more and more of her husband's attention to the exclusion of everything else—even of herself and her needs.

It was close upon a year ago that Byron Gaunt had astonished the world at large and London Society in particular by taking to himself a wife. For years he had proved so impervious to the most determined attacks of matchmaking mothers and husband-seeking daughters that at last they had given him up in despair, and the quiet, reserved politician had come to be accepted as a confirmed bachelor—a valuable addition to a dinner or reception, but altogether useless from a matrimonial point of view.

And then, quite suddenly, a brief paragraph in the *Morning Post* had galvanised Society into recognition of the fact that a most eligible *parti* had been allowed to slip.

A marriage has been arranged and will take place at the church of St. Jude, Otterbourne-St.-Jude, between Mr. Byron Courtenay Gaunt, member for the Otterbourne division, and Miss Cecily Drayton, daughter of the Rev. Carlyon Drayton, Rector of St. Jude's, Otterbourne.

Could a bomb-shell have exploded in Hyde Park during church parade it would hardly have created greater excitement than this simple and unassuming paragraph. London—that part of it which counts, at least—buzzed with curiosity as to the origin, circumstances, and appearance of the bride, and it was unanimously agreed that the unimpressionable Gaunt had probably been "caught" by some little country-bumpkin whose very innocence and artlessness had proved his undoing. And Society laughed—particularly those members of it who had angled unsuccessfully in the same waters whence the "little country bumpkin" had landed her fish.

But the laugh subsided into a rather wry smile when finally Gaunt brought his bride to London. Her charm, her radiant prettiness—about which there could be no possible question—and her frocks, which were the acme of good taste and expensiveness, all combined to assign her an incontestable position of her own, quite apart from that

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which her husband's wealth and increasing weight in political circles assured her, and the first six months of Cecily's married life partook more of the nature of a triumphal progress than anything else.

For those first six months, too, she was entirely happy. But after this had come Gaunt's accession to the Under-Secretaryship, and with it an immense increase of work and a consequent curtailing of the time which he could bestow upon his wife.

An older woman would have recognised the necessity and bowed to it, but Cecily, young, more than a trifle spoilt, and bubbling over with youth's imperative demand to occupy the centre of the picture, resented it bitterly. She felt slighted and set aside, and gradually she even began to doubt her husband's love for her.

And then, of course, as is nearly always the way of things when a pretty woman feels herself neglected by her husband, a *tertium*

She rose, drawing her hands away from his clasp, her eyes rather frightened. "Humphrey, if I came with you it would only be because I'm miserable at home, not because I love you," she said irresolutely.

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quid had appeared on the scene to meet the deficiency, in the person of Humphrey Drake.

He surrounded Cecily with all those little attentions which are so dear to the heart of woman, and there was a charming atmosphere of homage and courtship about their friendship in which she bloomed like a flower in the sun. And since he was genuinely in love with her—and a genuine love is the most difficult thing in the world to withstand, for sincerity always means strength—Cecily's feet had begun to wander along untrodden paths, and to find them pleasant.

Up till now her love for her husband had kept her from taking that last irretrievable step of all, although Drake had urged it more than once. But, as he said, he could wait. His love and urgency and Byron Gaunt's blindness to his wife's loneliness could have but one ultimate ending.

The climax came on the first anniversary of the wedding-day—a date that is always fraught with dangerous possibilities, did men but realise it!

The wintry sunlight streamed in at the windows as though aware of the importance of the occasion and striving to acquit itself befittingly, the log-fire crackled cheerily on the hearth, and Cecily herself descended to breakfast, clad in a becoming new frock, her face dimpling with pleasurable anticipation.

She felt quite sure that there would be a small package beside her plate, neatly sealing-waxed as jewellers' parcels usually are, and it also seemed probable that Byron would have some suitable suggestion to make concerning a little commemoration dinner *à deux* at the Carlton, to be followed by a box at the theatre.

Cecily's questing eyes espied a big pile of letters beside her plate at table, and she advanced eagerly. Apparently her husband had not heard her entrance; he was engrossed in the morning's newspaper.

"Good-morning, Byron!" she said gaily, and anyone but an Under-Secretary wholly absorbed in the leader would have been awakened to a sense of his shortcomings by the bird-like thrill of suppressed excitement in her young voice.

But the actions of members of the Government are frequently "wropt in mistry," and Gaunt was no exception to the rule. Oblivious to the demands of the most important member of his constituency, he rushed headlong on his fate.

"Good-morning, dear," came absent-mindedly from behind the crisp sheets of *The Times*.

Cecily stared at the top of her husband's head—it was all the view of him that the offending newspaper permitted her. She opened her lips as though to make some response, then closed them tightly—too tightly—again.

Her eyes sought the postman's pile in front of her. It consisted of letters only—nothing else. No attractive little packet lodged itself among them, incredible though it seemed.

Mechanically she poured out her husband's coffee, and helped herself to kidneys and bacon from the hot dishes on the sideboard, since Byron appeared too much occupied to wait upon her. Then she began to open her letters, one after the other. They were nearly all from relatives and friends congratulating her upon this first anniversary of her wedding; apparently her husband was the only person who had forgotten all about it.

Presently he looked up, his attention caught by the sound of the slitting of many envelopes.

"What a voluminous correspondence you have this morning, dear," he observed casually.

And still no suspicion of the cause penetrated to his inner consciousness!

Cecily looked at him with a curious expression in her eyes.

"Yes," was all she vouchsafed in answer.

"Been sending out invitations, I suppose?" went on Gaunt, catching at the most probable explanation.

"No."

But it is to be doubted whether her husband even heard the chilly little monosyllable; he was already re-immersed in his newspaper.

Cecily finished her breakfast composedly, and presently, when Gaunt had retired to his study with his secretary in attendance, she sought the telephone.

"Is that you, Humphrey?" she asked, when a voice hallo'ed inquiringly from the other end of the wire.

"Cecily!" Followed a pause of astonishment. "Is it really you?"

"Yes. Humphrey, you—you know what you asked me—that night—at the Mallinson's dance?"

"Yes"—joyfully. "And twice before and several times since. I shall always go on asking it—darling!" This last in a lower tone, but still one quite audible along the wire.

Cecily smiled a little into the unresponsive mouthpiece, and a delicate flush crept up from her throat to her very forehead. There was something delightfully headlong and overwhelming about Drake's lovemaking.

"Well, you needn't," she murmured back into the 'phone. "Because—because—I'll come."

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II.

It was a cold, cheerless afternoon when Cecily set forth on the great adventure, turning her young rebellious feet from the sheltered paths they had known towards the sad and difficult beyond, from which there is no return save with mud-bespattered garments.

Humphrey Drake was to meet her at Waterloo. She consulted his letter of instructions before she set about making her final arrangements. The letter contained something else besides the instructions—a good deal of love and happy planning for the future—but the instructions themselves were very explicit, and as Gaunt had gone down to the House there would be no difficulty in carrying them out.

Very quickly Cecily set her small affairs in order, packing a bag with immediate necessaries and with the trifles of jewellery which had been hers before her marriage. The handsome rings and other jewels which had constituted her husband's wedding gift to her she made into a neat package and addressed to him, leaving it in a conspicuous place on his table. With a resentful recollection of the morning of her wedding anniversary and its bitter disappointment, she carefully sealed the packet with wax, making it, as much as her unaccustomed fingers would permit, into the semblance of a jeweller's parcel. In her present frame of mind that little touch of irony was irresistible.

Then she scrawled a note to her husband, telling him that she was leaving him, and with whom.

You don't want me (she wrote). You leave me quite outside your life. Politics are all you care about, and you never even remembered the first anniversary of our wedding-day.

On the whole, the letter was rather a pathetic composition, and that naïve touch about the wedding-day might well bring a sudden dimness to the Under-Secretary's keen grey eyes when he came to read it.

Shortly after lunch Cecily, bag in hand, stole across the deserted hall and let herself out through the front door. She closed it quietly, so that the servants, engrossed by the excellent dinner the housekeeper had provided for them, never heard the sound of their mistress' going as she stepped across the threshold, laying aside the shelter of her home like a discarded cloak.

Drake's instructions had been "to pick up a taxi" after she had left the house, but by the time she had traversed the Square without encountering one, and had drawn blank at the nearest taxi-rank, she began to wish she had told the butler to call one for her before she set out. And then, with a sudden start, she remembered that the bag she was carrying would inevitably have aroused the butler's surprise and curiosity, so that there was some meaning, after all, in Humphrey's explicit directions.

There seemed to be an extraordinary dearth of unappropriated taxi-cabs in Cecily's immediate neighbourhood that afternoon. Several passed her in succession, and in each case the little half-masted flag indicated that someone had very literally stepped in before her.

She began to feel rather anxious. The time was slipping along, and trains and the tide wait for no man, or woman either. Also, the bag she was carrying felt heavy on her arm, and her hand ached with the force with which, in her nervous flurry, she was unconsciously gripping it.

At length an empty taxi hove in view, leisurely tooling over the wood pavement, and it was with a sigh of relief that Cecily sank back against its cushions, after instructing the driver to take her as quickly as possible to Waterloo Station.

The chauffeur did his best, but a block in the traffic delayed them for several minutes, and when at last Cecily fled across the station to the appointed platform it was only to meet Drake's harassed face and the news that their train had just started.

"Oh, Humphrey, whatever shall we do?" exclaimed Cecily dejectedly. "We can't possibly wait about for the next train. I left a letter for Byron on his table, and if by any chance he were to return early he'd find it there, and—and——"

"Come in pursuit," concluded Drake. "Of course he would. But don't worry, little girl. We'll drive to the nearest garage, and we'll hire a car that will get us out of London almost as quickly as the train."

Reassured, Cecily surrendered her bag to Humphrey's care, and before very long a big grey car had borne them through the crowded London streets and out on to the wide, west-country high road.

Their destination was a secluded little place called Waynham Birches, about seventy miles from town, and as the big car raced along, piling up the miles behind them, Cecily, for the first time, began to feel a little frightened at the enormity of the step she had taken, and an odd feeling of depression seized her. It seemed almost as though a journey begun so inauspiciously might conceivably end in disaster. But when she confided her apprehensions to Humphrey he laughed them aside cheerfully.

"Not a bit of it," he declared. "We had our slice of bad luck at the beginning, that's

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all. Now it will be plain sailing, you'll see."

For a few minutes Cecily's spirits rose in response to Drake's gay courage. But they soon began to ebb again. Somehow, the delay which had led to their missing their train seemed to her like the hand of Providence outstretched to save her from herself. And she had pushed the hand aside—rushed heedlessly on.

It was bitterly cold. A keen, north-east wind was blowing, and the chill air seemed to penetrate into the car from every side. The skies had grown dark and leaden-coloured, and every now and then a little scurry of snowflakes drove past the windows.

Cecily rubbed one of the misted panes with her glove and peered out.

"I believe we're going to have a heavy snowstorm," she said nervously.

Drake cast a swift glance outside.

"I shouldn't be surprised," he answered. "Never mind, we're quite cosy in here, and when we get to Waynham Birches there's a ripping little inn where we can stay. We can look round for a suitable cottage from there. I think I know just the place."

Cecily made no response, and the car flew on.

In a few minutes the snow was coming down in good earnest—a blinding storm of fine, white flakes racing before the wind.

"By Jove! It's a regular blizzard!" exclaimed Drake. "Glad I'm not the chauffeur."

The chauffeur was bending over his wheel, peering ahead through the dense white veil that swirled in front of him. Already the road lay sheeted in snow, and the hedges and ditches were fast losing their distinctive outlines beneath the same soft, insidious garment.

"I wish—I wish he wouldn't drive quite so fast," said Cecily apprehensively, as with a sudden swerve the car just shaved the road-side ditch. "Snow is so misleading."

"You needn't be afraid," Drake reassured her. "This car can travel, and the man is a fine driver."

Hardly had he spoken when, with a warning hoot, another car emerged from a narrow road on the left—appearing suddenly, as it were, almost out of the snow itself, for to the eye the white-sheeted hedges had merged themselves into the flat, white level of the road.

There came the raucous grating of brakes too suddenly applied, a crash, and the whir of wrenched machinery, and then to Cecily it seemed as though the end of the world had come in a horrible chaos of noise and confusion, and that she was falling, falling, endlessly through space.

When she came to herself again she was lying on a couch in someone's sitting-room, and a short, grey-haired man was standing looking down at her.

"That's right!" he exclaimed cheerily, as her eyes opened. "That's right! You're coming round, I see."

Cecily stared at him, her senses gradually returning.

"Where am I?" she asked at last.

"You're quite safe. You're in my house. I'm the man whose car you ran into at the cross-roads. And as I'm a doctor and unhurt, I'm quite at your service, Mrs.——" He paused suggestively.

Cecily made no attempt to fill the gap. She sat up, pushing back her hair.

"Where's Humphrey?" she asked.

"Your husband's upstairs, being put to bed by a trained nurse who looks after some of my patients. I'm sorry to say he himself will want looking after for some time to come——"

"How—how badly is he hurt?" cried Cecily.

"It's difficult to say at present," answered the doctor diplomatically. "I can't speak definitely till I've made a thorough examination. But you may make up your mind that he won't be able to be moved for some months."

Months! Cecily stared at him in terror What was this cruel trick that fortune had played them?

The doctor was still speaking, but for a moment the horror of what had happened so overwhelmed her that she hardly heeded him, and only caught the sense of his final words:

". . . as he is worrying himself, it will be better to let him see you. So if you will come with me now I will take you to him."

Mechanically she followed the doctor upstairs, and presently the soft closing of a door told her she was alone with Drake.

He lay in a big four-poster bed, very straight and still, his face white and drawn with pain.

"Darling!" His voice was a mere whisper. "Listen. You must go back."

Cecily shook her head.

"No, no. I shan't leave you," she answered quickly.

"You must." The whispering voice was tense with urgency. "You must go home. I'm helpless. It's my back that's injured."

"You'll get well. I'll nurse you."

"No, I shan't get well—at least, not for a very long time. Perhaps I may never—walk

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"Yes. It's rotten luck, isn't it? But promise me to go back—promise me! The doctor's car is all right; he'll lend it. And our driver's unhurt. Go back. Perhaps—you'll reach London—before Gaunt comes home."

III.

The dusk had fallen when Cecily slowly mounted the steps of her home and let herself in with the latch-key which she found still reposing in the depths of her hand-bag.

"Byron!" she faltered. "Aren't you—aren't you angry with me?" . . . "No, I'm glad—and proud, Cecily. I hoped you'd tell me some day. You see—I've known about it all along."

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again. I'm helpless to protect you now. So you must go back to Gaunt."

Then, as she still hesitated:

"For heaven's sake, go, Cecily! It's the only thing to be done." He broke off, the pain mastering him for a moment. She saw the beads of sweat gather on his brow and trickle slowly down his face. With a gentle movement she wiped his forehead with her handkerchief.

"Humphrey——" The name choked on her lips.

The faintest little smile twisted his wrung mouth.

Her breath came a little unevenly as she crossed the threshold. Had Byron returned, she wondered, and found her letter? If so—but she pushed aside the thought of the explanations that must inevitably follow, and made her way on swift feet to her husband's study.

There, on his table, just as she had left them, lay her letter and the business-like looking package containing her jewellery.

With a stifled sob she sank on her knees beside the table, clutching with eager fingers the packet and the letter. She had not realised until this moment how much her

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husband's ignorance signified. But now the wave of immeasurable relief that swept over her, snapping the long tension of the day, brought with it a sudden, illuminating knowledge of all that husband and home and safety meant.

It was Byron, after all, whom she loved. The attraction that Humphrey Drake had held for her had been like a will-o'-the-wisp, luring her, with its tempting promise of a short cut to happiness, into the quicksands of disaster.

During the months that followed, Cecily began to wonder why she had ever been so discontented, and to tell herself that she had altogether misjudged her husband. He was wonderfully tender and thoughtful of her in an undemonstrative kind of way, and he encouraged her to take an interest in the political aspect of his life, sharing his views and opinions with her, and gradually making his hopes and ambitions as much a matter of moment to her as to himself.

Husband and wife drew very close to each other these days, and Cecily would have been utterly happy but for the secret she carried in her heart of that bitter, snow-swept day when she had so nearly flung away the substance for the shadow.

The knowledge of it, and of Byron's absolute belief in her—founded, as she knew it to be, on his ignorance of the wretched episode—seared her very soul. The burden of it grew heavier day by day. It seemed to raise an impassable barrier between her and this new, understanding Byron, who was so infinitely more to her now than he had ever been in the earlier days of her marriage.

At length the time came when she felt she could bear it no longer. Byron's trust and confidence and his tender, encompassing love hurt her almost like a physical pain, and she determined that she must tell him the truth about that day when, but for the untoward happenings of Fate, she would have gone away with Drake, and accept whatever consequences the telling might entail. At present she felt she could not look her husband in the face. Always that secret lay between them.

Haltingly she began her confession, but before she had spoken a dozen words Byron's hand, lightly laid across her lips, silenced her, and instead of the outburst of indignant anger which she had anticipated she found that he was smiling—actually smiling!

"You needn't say any more, Cecily. I know—all that you are trying to tell me," he said quietly.

Cecily stared at him.

"You—you know?" she stammered.

He nodded, and she saw his eyes were still kind and friendly. It was incomprehensible!

"Byron!" she faltered. "Aren't you—aren't you angry with me?"

"No," he said. "No, I'm glad—and proud, Cecily. I hoped you'd tell me some day. You see—I've known about it all along."

"You've known all along?"

"Yes. You left Drake's letter lying about, the one containing the arrangements about meeting and so forth, and I found it the same evening. But I also found you safe at home. And so I knew that at the last moment you had resisted—put him aside—for me. Thank God for it, Cecily!" he added very low.

He drew her towards him, and for a moment the temptation to let him remain content in this belief was well-nigh irresistible. But the honesty which lay beneath all her surface petulance and triviality wouldn't let her. Now and for the future there must be no more misunderstanding, no more concealment. The truth might alienate her husband for ever—now, just when she had learnt how much he meant to her! But the truth must be told.

She wrenched herself from his arms.

"Stop!" She took her risk gallantly. "Our future mustn't be built upon a sham. I did *not* resist, Byron. I didn't try to. I was ready and willing to go with Humphrey." Involuntarily he winced. "Yes," she continued steadily, "that's the truth, and you've got to know it. Chance alone intervened to stop me. First, I couldn't find a taxi; then we missed the train. Afterwards, when we had started by car, a blinding snowstorm came on, and in the snow we collided with another motor. Humphrey was terribly injured and our own car was wrecked. . . . But I meant to go with him. If all those things hadn't happened I should have gone. I shouldn't be here. Now, what have you to say?" She faced him, tremulously defiant and afraid, awaiting judgment.

He held out his arms to her.

"Only this, dear. Thank God for His destiny—and for you."

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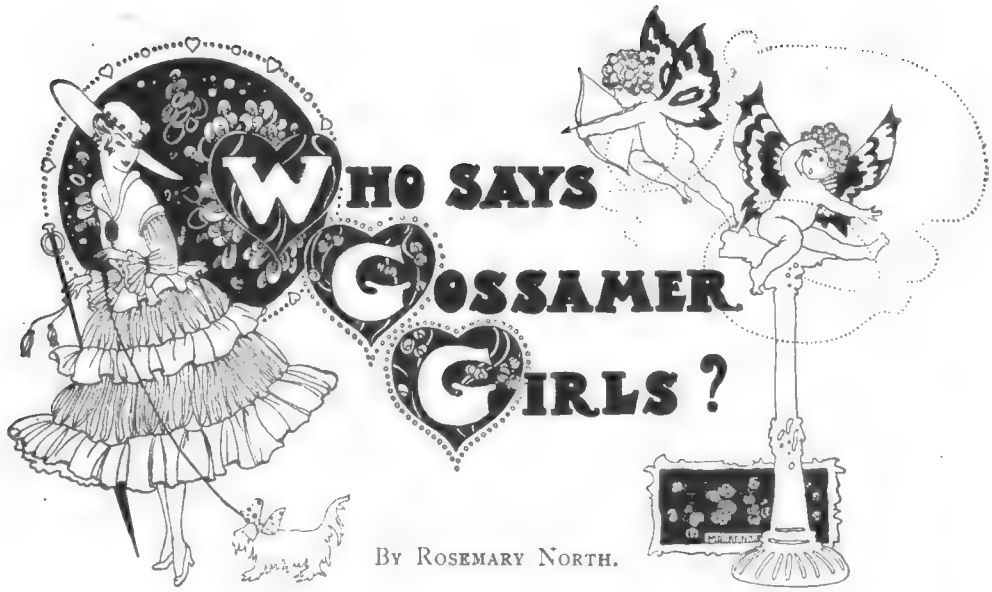

By Rosemary North.

In the eyes of our fighting men the gossamer girl who makes no sacrifice on the altar of her country's need often appears to be far more worthy of homage than the girl who is engaged in hard and often uncongenial work. In the following article the author voices the claims of Miss Doing-her-Bit, and discusses the attitude of the men on leave towards her and her butterfly sister.

The war has extinguished many things besides street-lamps, but it has not quite succeeded in extinguishing the gossamer girl. She still pursues her rose-leaf path, confident no more can be required of her than to sell programmes at charity *matinées* and flutter in decorative garments about any khaki that comes her way.

Meanwhile her patriotic sisters are stepping into the breach and proving their womanhood by shouldering the burdens laid down by their fighting men. They have not time for all the embroideries of the toilet in which the butterflies are able to revel.

And the point is this: Do the men who come back on leave rate the patriotic girl at her proper worth, or are they inclined to discard her for her less-occupied though probably more showy butterfly sister?

Men are unreasonable creatures; they like to be seen about with ornamental girls, and are vaguely resentful if their own particular Amaryllis rubs off some of her bloom in her encounter with the workaday world. And, alluring posters to the contrary, some forms of war-work are far from beautifying.

Take the case of Marigold, the dainty daughter of a country rector, who before the war had never done any more strenuous outdoor work than a little mild gardening and fruit-picking. Her prettiness was of the fragile Dresden china order; she had golden hair, and was given to pale blue ribbons and rose-wreathed hats.

It was her extreme daintiness and her appealing ways that wrought havoc with the heart of Lieutenant Alec Carstairs when that susceptible young man was stationed in the vicinity. He went to France with her photograph and a knot of pale blue satin ribbon purloined from her Sunday hat in his breast-pocket.

Ten months later he returned on leave and called at the Rectory. Miss Marigold was over at Yew Tree Farm, the housemaid told him; she was helping there, nearly all the men having gone. Alec strode thither, visions of Marigold in a dainty cotton frock and blue sun-bonnet, collecting eggs or skimming cream in a musical-comedy dairy, taking possession of his soul.

He found her in the stables cleaning out one of the loose boxes. She wore a russet-brown coat and abbreviated skirt, while high boots of stout leather concealed the dainty ankles once caressed by silk stockings. There were bits of straw in her golden hair, her cheeks had lost their exquisite pink and were undeniably tanned, the hand she gave him was rougher and less rosily perfect than of yore.

Lieutenant Carstairs gasped. He had left

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Marigold a clinging muslin-clad damsel with a rooted objection to soiling her fingers; he found her competent and girded for the fray, and, yes! with a dab of mud on her round and dimpled chin! The change did not please him; the fact that she had answered her country's call and was doing something useful at last did not, to his youth and inexperience, atone for her ruffled hair and unbecoming costume. To his mind her first duty was to look pretty and charming for his edification; any work that interfered with such a result was sternly to be deprecated. The discovery that Marigold had not failed her country was nothing to him; she had failed *him*, and that was the unforgivable sin.

Even the sight of her at tea-time, dainty as ever in white muslin belted with blue, did not remove the impression made in the stable-yard. Lieutenant Carstairs fled Londonwards next morning, and the photo of a beauty chorus maiden now usurps the spot once dedicated to that of Marigold. The young officer has consoled himself; the tragedy lies in the fact that Marigold has not.

Men are conservative beings; deep down in their hearts they still nourish a suspicion of the competent, bread-winning maiden, and turn with relief to her more clinging sister, who gives them the open homage so dear to the heart of the lordly male. The protective instinct is very strong in most men, and as a rule they fail to recognise that though a girl may be perfectly capable of taking care of herself when necessary, she may appreciate the luxury of being looked after even more than her butterfly sister, to whom protection is a matter of course.

Certain it is that Miss Stay-at-Home, daintily turned out from the crown of her carefully coiffured head to the toes of her high-heeled suède shoes, has far more chance of attracting homage than Miss Doing-her-Bit, who is bending her back over an obstinate turnip-field or wrinkling her brows over invoices and estimates.

The attitude of the man on leave is perhaps not hard to understand; exiled from all feminine society he is apt to build up a false standard, to expect all girls to be dazzlingly decorative, and to reject all who fall short of the standard of his dreams. Man-like, he judges by externals only, and counts an artistically powdered nose a more meritorious performance than the cleaning-out of a cowshed or stable.

Moreover, he is not unnaturally inclined to be exacting; he likes a girl whose time is her own and who can join in his revels without reference to a possibly grudging employer. Here again the gossamer girl scores, while the one who is doing her bit, and has every right to share the joys of the man she is backing up at home, has to give

The gossamer girl is able to revel in all the embroideries of the toilet denied, through lack of time, to her more patriotic sisters, who are proving their womanhood by shouldering burdens laid down by their fighting men.

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Men, deep down in their hearts, still nourish a suspicion of the competent, bread-winning maiden, and turn with relief to her more clinging sister, who gives them the open homage so dear to the heart of the lordly male.

way to her less patriotic sister, who not only eats her cake, but has it too.

Margaret's experience was one that might happen to any girl engaged in responsible work which could not be lightly abandoned, even at the bidding of an impetuous young sub. home on seven days' leave from the Front.

It was unfortunate that Clarence should arrive when she had just returned pale and fagged from a hard day at the office, arrayed in a severely serviceable waterproof and her least becoming hat. To make matters worse there was her younger sister, Rita, fresh as paint after a day devoted to nothing more strenuous than a little desultory shopping. The knowledge that she had appeared at a disadvantage clung to Margaret even when later she had solaced her soul by donning a *crêpe-de-Chine* blouse and silk stockings; moreover, she was tired and worried, and at the moment less companionable than the girl Clarence remembered of old.

Instinctively he turned to Rita, who was always ready to prattle at a moment's notice, and sang the latest revue successes with an arch, self-conscious air which he mentally designated as "rather fetching." The climax came when Margaret, having been forced to refuse lunch and a *matinée* on the morrow owing to press of work, he promptly invited Rita to keep him company, and ignored Margaret's suggestion that she was free to go to an evening performance.

It was the same throughout the week. Rita's time was her own, Margaret's was not, so it was Rita who went a-frivoling, for Clarence, obstinate and exacting, showed little inclination to fit in his festivities to suit the elder girl's leisure. And when he returned to France it was Rita who flaunted a turquoise ring on her left hand, while Margaret went about her work with rebellion at her heart, and the aching knowledge that the man whose friendship she had once hoped might develop into something deeper had failed utterly to appreciate her devotion to duty.

The girl who is "carrying on" may be equally charming, the man may know perfectly well that arrayed in her prettiest clothes instead of the uninspired garments of business life she would be equally well turned out, but—the gossamer girl is on the spot, she is obviously out to attract, ready and spoiling for a frolic, and—the gossamer girl wins, hands down.

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Rescuing Wrandel

by Mollie Frank Ellis

"We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth."

Uncle Jake Cannon, ex-sheriff of Yavapia County, looked thoughtfully at young Jimmy Stratton, who had succeeded him in office. His keen old eyes, undimmed by their years of battle against desert sun and sands, were softened now by a tender amusement.

He smiled across at his grey-haired wife, sitting near him on the creeper-shaded verandah, her sewing-basket in her lap.

"When a man of twenty-six, Jimmy," he said, "gets a notion that life ain't worth livin' in his own town and wants to clear out for parts unknown, it don't take a Sherlock Holmes to figure that something has gone wrong either with his job or his sweetheart.

"Now, I happen to know that there's nothin' the matter with your job—the whole of Dry Valley is proud of you, boy; so I fancy if you'll just tell me about that little, slim, red-headed gal of Tom Nolan's, we'll get to the bottom of things at once."

Young Stratton pulled his wide hat lower over his eyes.

"I can't tell you anything about her, Uncle Jake," he answered bitterly, "because I don't know anything about her—not a thing! I thought I did. I—we—— But now——"

"Well, that's interestin'," encouraged the old man, "but not exactly enlightenin'."

The young Sheriff dug into the sand with his riding-crop. A dull red crept to his cheek; he hesitated an instant, then, with a sudden gesture of despair he turned to Mrs. Cannon.

"I know she loves me, Aunt Nellie," he declared. "I know it because—well, just as I know that she belongs to me and I to her! But we quarrel all the time! It seems that nothing I do pleases her—and Heaven knows I've tried my best! She is jolly and pleasant with all the rest of the boys, so I suppose I'm the one to blame, but for the life of me I can't think why."

Mrs. Cannon, who was "Aunt Nellie" to the youths of Cactus, lifted her troubled eyes to her husband's face, in mute but confident appeal. Never, in all the years that she had known him, had he failed to answer a call for help. Uncle Jake stared reflectively before him and puffed at his pipe in silence.

"You say she's all right with the rest of the boys?" he inquired after a time.

Jimmy nodded gloomily.

"Yet you can't seem to do a thing to please her?"

"Not a thing!"

Uncle Jake watched him keenly, a twinkle deep in his kindly eyes. He did not reply, but wisely waited for the further confidence which he felt was trembling on the young man's lips.

"Two weeks ago," began the young Sheriff, "I asked her to marry me. She refused."

"That was the first time you asked her?" queried the old man.

"No, the last time," corrected Jimmy.

Uncle Jake's mouth twitched.

"I see," he sympathised. "And what did you say when she refused you?"

"I said," replied Jimmy sharply, "that I would accept that as final—that I wasn't going to be kept dangling at any woman's apron-strings for ever."

"And she said?——"

"I didn't give her time to say it! I walked away. I'd been stepped on enough—I'm no woman's doormat!"

"Well?"

The young Sheriff twisted his leather riding-crop with tense fingers.

"It's all over town that she's to be married to Joe Green next Thursday," he said huskily. "Now, Uncle Jake, you know Joe Green is not fit to tie her shoe, and—anyway, if he was a little tin god, she belongs to *me*. You hear? She belongs to me!"

Uncle Jake was silent, his eyes carefully averted from his guest's face. There was a

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long, quiet moment, with only the drone of bees in the creeper that shaded the verandah. Suddenly Jimmy's twisted riding-crop was released and a strangled groan broke from his lips.

"I came over because I thought maybe—if you knew of anything—if you thought there was any chance for me to—if you could tell me, Uncle Jake, what to do!"

Jake Cannon met his wife's pitying old eyes, and lifted his brows inquiringly. She blushed and nodded. He leant over the verandah railing and emptied his pipe.

"Did I ever tell you," he drawled, "how John Smith caught a thief?"

"No," responded Jimmy, and drew a sigh of relief. Help was coming, and in Uncle Jake's own inimitable way.

"John Smith was servin' as deputy under Long Horn Bill Williams when he first met Nellie Raggin. Long Horn—they called him that because he had been a cattleman before he came to Cactus—had just married Sallie Perkins, old Copper King Perkins' daughter, and this gal Nellie came to visit them.

"Cactus had always thought Sally was the prettiest woman in Dry Valley, and so she had been up to then, but that little Nellie Raggin just took the shine off her like an arc-light dims a candle.

"Nellie had eyes the colour of pansies, and her hair in the sunlight was like rough gold. She was friendly to everybody, but she had a way of holdin' her head as if she was a princess. Whenever she smiled a dimple came out and twinkled at the corner of her red lips, and——"

"Jake," broke in Mrs. Cannon softly, "hadn't you better go on with the story?"

Uncle Jake favoured the young Sheriff with a wink.

"Ever noticed, Jimmy, how jealous of each other women are? Don't ever make the mistake of praisin' one of 'em before another."

"Jake!" Two pink spots glowed in Mrs. Cannon's cheeks, and her faded eyes sparkled warningly.

"Anyway," went on the old man, "she was the prettiest woman I ever saw, and always has been. But then that ain't got nothin' to do with the story. Well, the first time John Smith laid eyes on her it was all over with him, but as it happened Nellie took a dead-set against him, an' nothin' he did pleased her. She laughed at him because he was big and awkward, and the more she laughed the clumsier he got.

"She was like this girl you've been tellin' us about—friendly as could be with all the other fellers; and, of course, that made the way she treated Smith all the worse.

"One night he got up his courage, and asked her to marry him; and the way she drew herself up like a queen, and flashed her pansy eyes at him, nearly drove him distracted. When she'd flounced out of the room, her cheeks red like big roses, he went out on to the verandah where Long Horn and Sallie were sittin', and he says:

"'I'm done! She can't bear the sight of me, and the only thing I know that will please her is never to let her set eyes on me again.'

"Well, Sallie just looked at him with her head screwed to one side and asked:

"'John Smith, if a man was to steal your watch, and you were to ask him for it politely, and he refused you, would you say, "All right, I'm done! You can't bear the sight of me, so I'll go away where you won't ever set eyes on me again?'"

"'Hardly,' said Smith.

"'Yet that's what you are doing to that little thief, Nellie Raggin. She deliberately stole your heart, and she won't either give it up or exchange with you. Why don't you fight for what belongs to you? That's the only way to win with a woman like Nellie.'

"'She's gentle and kind with the others because she's not afraid of them, but when you come looming up like a big mountain of determination, and sit there and look at her with eyes that say plainly, "You're mine, and you know it, and I can wait here for ever if necessary," why, of course, that frightened little heart of hers turns at bay and fights with every weapon it has.'

"And then she laughed and blushed and said:

"'What babies you big men are, after all! Mr. Deputy Sheriff, why don't you catch your thief?'

"Well, that set John thinkin' till he couldn't eat or sleep. He just mooned round in a dazed sort of way and jumped every time anybody spoke to him.

"About this time a man named Wrandel came out from the East to see old Copper King on business. Sallie put him up at her house because the old man wasn't much on entertainin' swells. At first Wrandel had seemed in a hurry, but as soon as he met Nellie Raggin he changed his mind.

"He started courtin' her, and everybody said Nellie would marry him—him bein' rich. Sure enough, soon after it was rumoured about that the weddin'-day had been fixed. Somebody told John Smith, and he went to Sallie about it.

"'I know it's true, John,' said Sallie mournfully. 'But I don't believe she loves him. She's cried herself to sleep nearly every night since you went away and didn't

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come back any more. Long Horn is glum as can be over it because he thinks Wrandel is a coward.'

"'I'm goin' out to talk to Long Horn a minute,' said Smith, and went out on to the back verandah where the Sheriff was cleanin' his guns.

"He sat down close to Long Horn and looked all around, careful, to see if anybody was in sight.

"'I've come out,' he says at last, 'to hear why you think that man Wrandel is a coward.'

"Long Horn never moved an eye, but just went on polishin' his revolver. When it was done to suit him he squinted along the barrel and laid it down beside him.

"'Sallie is like most women, John,' he replied quietly; 'she talks too much. But she thinks a lot of you, and she's worried over Nellie, so we won't complain of her this time. It's not safe for any man to call another a coward unless he can prove his words, and I can't do that!'

"'I'll say this much, though—because it's you, old chap—I've been judgin' men for some time, first as deputy and then as sheriff, and I've never made a mistake yet. The first glance I gave at Wrandel I put him down a coward. Now, what's the point?'

"Smith just sat there a minute, starin' out across the desert to the ridge. The sun was settin' and the sands were glistenin' red and green and gold.

"'Long Horn,' he asked, 'was there a woman ever lived who could love a coward?'

"'No,' replied Long Horn.

"'You've told me one thing I needed to know, and Sallie has told me another,' said Smith, his voice husky. 'I'll not forget it, Bill. Now, there's two more things you can do for me. To-night and to-morrow you can relate, casually, to your guests, the experiences you've had—and some you ain't had—about rich men bein' grabbed up by bands of desperadoes and held for ransom. And then to-morrow night you and Sallie can go early to one of the neighbours and spend the evenin', leavin' your guests at home. Then I'm goin' to——'

"Long Horn held up his hand.

"'That'll do!' he broke in. 'I can do all you want easily, because I'm fond of talkin', and we've been meanin' for some time to visit the neighbours. But I'm sheriff, and I don't want to hear no more!'

"Well, that next twenty-four hours was the longest John Smith had ever known. It didn't take him an hour to fix it up with Chuck Reynolds and Poker Rogers. Next to Long Horn, they were the best friends he had. And it didn't take but a little while more for Chuck to sneak over to Beaver Tanks for the wigs and things. All the rest of the time was just waitin'.

"But at last they saw Long Horn and Sallie leavin' the house. They waited till the moon rose; then they put the stuff on and slipped over and knocked. Nellie answered the door, and her eyes got big and her cheeks lost their colour when she saw who it was.

"But she never said a word when they pushed past her, but just closed the door and follered 'em into the room. Wrandel was sittin' beside the table, and he didn't look up for a minute. When he did he stared down the muzzles of three guns aimed straight at his breast.

"His mouth dropped open and he gasped, 'Good Lord! They're after me for ransom!' And before you could say a word he'd slipped out of that chair and was hidin' behind that gal!

"Bless me! but it paid John Smith for everything just to see the expression on Nellie's face! The colour rushed into her cheeks and her big eyes snapped with scorn anger. Nobody said a word, and after a minute of stillness you could have cut with a knife she said:

"'Mr. Wrandel, I feel sure that these gentlemen, knowing you are not used to our little ways, will allow you to get behind the door. It will afford you much more protection than my small body possibly can.'

"'Mr. Wrandel is to go with us,' said Smith. 'He will be nicely protected till such time as his friends see fit to comply with our demands. As for you, Miss Raggin, you need not be afraid; we don't war on women. Bring him on, boys!'

"She didn't answer a word till they had reached the door—Wrandel squealin' and pleadin' for them not to hurt him—but when she did speak her voice was so choked with rage she could hardly talk.

"'Don't be afraid, Mr. Wrandel. I shall see that you are rescued. Being my future husband you are, in a way, my property; and I am perfectly capable of protecting every bit of my property from that man there,' and she pointed to Smith.

"Well, of course, by that Smith knew she had recognised him, but he never said a word. They all rode off and made straight for Cactus Ridge—for Smith had arranged to ride Wrandel all about in the hills and then bring him home and let him loose.

"Everything went off fine. They raced up through the ridge trail, whoopin' and yellin', and in a couple of hours they decided Wrandel had had enough, and turned toward

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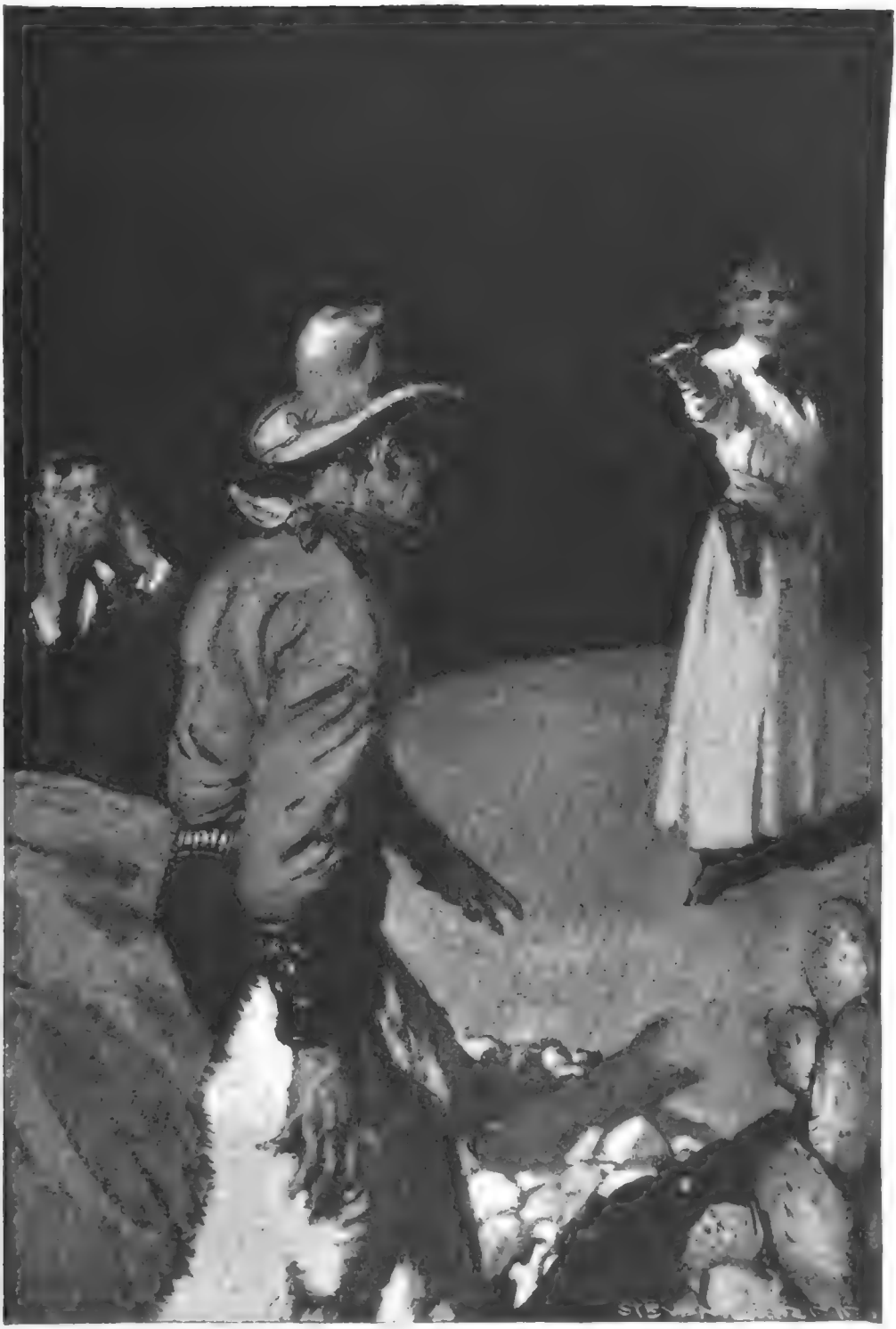

"A vicious little voice behind him snapped: 'Halt! Throw up your hands!' Smith whirled round—and there was Nellie Raggin aimin' a revolver straight at his breast!"

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home. There is only one trail there, and about half-a-mile from where the path opens out into the desert there's a big rock on the side of the ridge.

"As they came even with this rock a sudden shot rang out, and a little cloud of sand puffed up right in front of Smith's horse. The men all drew their guns, but Smith whispered:

"'Don't either of you shoot! Leave him to me!'

"He spoke to his horse and started on. Instantly the revolver barked again from behind the rock. Smith threw up his gun and fired twice. There was an instant of tense waiting; then a little figure sprang out, clearly silhouetted against the moon, and with a scream of anguish sank to the earth.

"Chuck Reynolds cried out with horror: 'Heavens, John! It's a woman—it's Nellie Raggin!'

"Poker Rogers was off his horse and up the hill like a shot, Reynolds and the man Wrandel close after him. Smith was the last to reach the scene.

"'She's still alive,' says Poker, his hand over her heart. 'What'll we do, John?'

"Smith stood a moment as if thinking hard. 'You and Chuck ride for Long Horn and Sallie,' he ordered at last.

"'All right,' replied Chuck, and him and Poker clattered off down the trail.

"As soon as they were gone the gal begin to moan. 'Water!' she whispered after a moment, so Smith started over to where his nag was standin' to see if there was any in his canteen.

"When he was about half-way there a vicious little voice behind him snapped: 'Halt! Throw up your hands!'

"Smith whirled round—and there was Nellie Raggin aimin' a revolver straight at his breast!

"'All right,' said Smith calmly.

"'Now come back here—slowly,' she ordered.

"Smith obeyed. When he was a few feet away she stopped him, and just stood there lookin' at him with a cruel little smile on her lips and a light in her eyes.

"'Didn't I tell you that I was perfectly capable of protecting myself and my property from you, John Smith?' she asked. Then, without taking her eyes from his face, she continued: 'And as for you, Mr. Wrandel, my advice is that you get on your horse and ride for Cactus. Also, I think I would take the first train East. I hardly believe you are fitted to our environment.'

"Not a word was said while Wrandel scrambled on to his nag and made off down the hill. 'I'll send back help,' he threw over his shoulder.

"'It will not be necessary,' she called. 'I shall be in Cactus in an hour with my prisoner.'

"Smith waited till Wrandel was out of sight, then he hauled down his arms and calmly proceeded to light a cigarette.

"'Hold up your hands!' she flashed at him.

"'Tut, tut, now!' says Smith. 'Let's be comfortable! It'll be an hour before the boys can get back with Long Horn and Sallie. Feelin' better, aren't you?'

"The gal looked at him, hesitatin' and hardly knowin' how to take this move. Smith spoke again—his pride in her courage and the beauty of her, with her gold hair flyin' in the wind, and her big eyes flashin' fire, had made a thumpin' in his heart that nearly took away his voice. Then, too, he was rememberin' Sallie's words: 'Why don't you fight for what belongs to you?'

"He took a deep breath and gripped his hands together tight. He had only hoped to show up Wrandel as a coward, but his opportunity had been given him—he would meet it with all there was in him!

"'Sit down,' he drawled, 'and take it easy. You've got everything the way you wanted it. You've got rid of the boys and you've showed me you could rescue Wrandel and you've got me at the other end of a six-shooter. And as I ordered the boys not to fire, and was careful to do my own shootin' straight up in the air, I reckon you aren't much hurt. Everything turned out fine, didn't it?'

"Well, her pansy eyes fairly flamed with wrath at the knowledge that Smith hadn't been taken in by her little trick, but had deliberately played into her hands.

"'Get on your horse!' she cried. 'It will be a pretty sight for Cactus to see its deputy sheriff captured by a girl—captured while bullying a respectable citizen like a drunken desperado!'

"'Yes,' acknowledged Smith, 'it would be if Cactus ever got to see it—which she won't.'

"'Why not—if I say so?' she questioned, and smiled at him loftily.

"Smith gave a last puff at his cigarette and threw it away.

"'Because, my lady,' he answered in a different voice, 'the time has come for you and me to have a little settlement of our affairs. I've played the game of love with you straight as I knew how, meaning to win or lose honestly. But you've stacked the cards against me from the first. I saw through your trick a few minutes ago. If

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you've got any more cards up your sleeve you'd better play 'em. Another minute will be too late.'

"'I don't understand your coarse terms of speech,' she replied, her little head held high, but her lips losin' their colour.

"'All right,' Smith answered. 'We'll talk straight English then. I love you—have always loved you from the first day I ever saw you—and you've known it all along. I've done you the highest honour any man can do a woman—I've asked you to be my wife. You refused to give me an honest answer either way. You just held me up to ridicule and mocked me and made a fool of me generally. I've stood it all, hopin' against hope that your flinty little heart would soften. Now I'm done! You belong to me, and you know it! I'm comin' to claim what's mine!'

"The colour was all gone from Nellie's face by this time, but she smiled, with that little sarcastic liftin' of her lips that always cut clean through him like a knife, and said:

"'Will you try a *détour*, or will you come straight into the working end of this gun?'

"'So long as you acted like a woman,' Smith answered, 'I treated you with the courtesy every decent man grants a woman merely because she *is* a woman; but now you've broken into this thing, man-fashion, you must abide by the rules of the game.'

"And then he stopped short, gave a kind of gasp, his eyes wide with terror, and pointed.

"'Look out!' he yelled. 'Behind you there—the rattler!'

"Nellie screamed and whirled about—and in an instant Smith had covered the distance between them and had snatched the gun from her hand.

"'Now,' he remarked, throwing it down the ridge, 'things will be a little more even. Don't be afraid, though, little woman! I'm going to give you something to protect yourself with—something more suited to your sex than any gun!'

"'Oh, oh, you coward!' she stamped, fairly wild with rage and humiliation.

"'S-sh!' soothed Smith, goin' back to where he first stood. 'Say anything that will help to relieve your feelin's, and then we'll settle down to business. As I said, I am going to give you something that will be a more certain protection against me than any gun.'

"'All you've got to do is to look me in the eyes and say "I do not love you, John Smith," and I give my word of honour that I will go away at once and never let you see me again.'

"'I hate you, John Smith!' she stormed, all the colour floodin' back into her cheeks.

"'Those are the wrong words,' he answered coolly. 'I'm comin' now, and the minute you say what I told you I stop; but if you can't say it, why, then I'm goin' to take you in my arms and kiss that gold hair and those beautiful eyes and that sweet mouth——'

"He stopped off short because the words made his heart leap up in his throat and choke him. To make quite sure that he should play fair to the last minute he folded his arms tightly across his breast.

"Step by step he advanced, holdin' her eyes with his. When he was so close he could have touched her by stretchin' out his arm she gave a gasp and held up her hand. He stopped at once.

"'I hate you, John Smith,' she faltered again through quiverin' lips.

"'You've forgot the countersign,' he says, his eyes burning down into hers. 'But I'll give you one more chance,' he continued through his set teeth. 'If you can't *say* it, just *look* it, and I'll go!'

"For an eternity they stood there like that. And of a sudden her sweet lips began to tremble, her dear pansy eyes softened and John Smith was looking straight down into heaven!

"'Oh, John,' she whispered, droopin' her head on his breast and slippin' her arms about his neck, 'why, *why* didn't you do this before?'"

The old ex-sheriff paused; there was a moment of silence. At last young Stratton rose.

"There may be a wedding in Cactus next Thursday," he said crisply, "but it won't be Joe Green's! Uncle Jake, I—I don't know how to thank——"

"I forgot to add," broke in the old man hastily, "that they married and lived happily ever afterwards. If you don't believe that, Jimmy," he continued, his eyes twinkling as he jerked his head towards his grey-haired wife, "just ask Mrs. Smith!"

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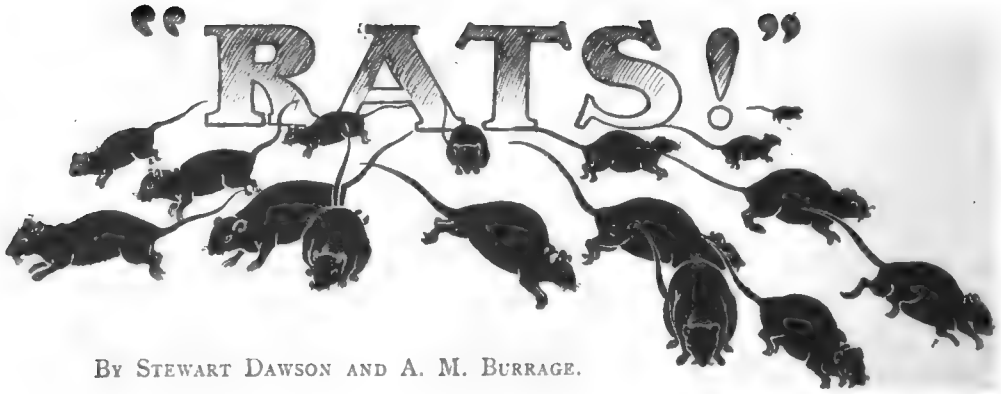
"RATS!"



By Stewart Dawson and A. M. Burrage.

"Now, muse, let's sing of rats."

The great art of making money consists of buying things from people who do not want them and selling them again to people who want them very much. Mr. William Cuff realised this and went one better, for people paid him to take away their unwanted possessions, which he afterwards disposed of without difficulty and to great advantage. To be brief, he was a rat-catcher, one of the few that not only live, but thrive, in modern London.

I don't know how he caught his rats, for that is a professional secret, and such men as William Cuff—Bill to his intimates—are notoriously secretive as to their profession. I only know that he had a fixed price for catching them—tuppence per head—and you couldn't beat him down. The rats, once caught, were his own property, and the men of all classes who owned terriers were his customers. He sold them at various prices, but reckoned that, one way and another, a rat caught by him augmented his income by about sevenpence.

It may therefore be safely said that William Cuff was well blessed with this world's goods. Within a year of the adventure about to be recorded he had advanced into matrimony and lived in a semi-detached villa in one of London's most respectable suburbs. Few people in that neighbourhood knew his profession, and Mrs. Cuff airily informed neighbours that her husband "did something in the City, and was quite his own master."

Now, on a certain never-to-be-forgotten night William Cuff received an S.O.S. call from the management of the Frivol Theatre. You know the Frivol Theatre, and the rival restaurants on either side. An enormous number of rats had copied the example of the Frivol's manager, in that they lived at the theatre and went to the restaurants for their meals. At the earnest desire of both restaurant proprietors and many leading lights of the stage, Mr. Cuff was invited to do his worst at his usual terms.

Consequently, at about half-an-hour after the evening performance of *The Kiss-Curl Girl* Mr. Cuff arrived, and was conducted to the mysterious depths below the stage. He came with a sack only half full of straw, and within an hour the sack was full. I don't know how he did it. That is his secret.

Afterwards Mr. Cuff exhibited his triumph to the stage-manager, who paid him forthwith, and he was in the act of leaving when a voice hailed him as "Bill" and a heavy hand fell on his shoulder. Turning, William Cuff recognised one Joe Purritt, an old crony whom he had not seen for years.

"Wot cher, Bill!" exclaimed Mr. Purritt. "Fancy meetin' you agin! So it's *you* who's bin catchin' all our rats?"

"Wot cher, Joe!" said Bill with enthusiasm. "How goes it? How's the world treating you?"

Mr. Cuff admitted that it was treating him well. Mr. Purritt, too, had small cause to grumble. He was master carpenter at the theatre and earning four pounds a week. With such wealth it was small wonder that he should have a bottle of whisky. He mentioned the bottle of whisky some five minutes later, when William Cuff was preparing to go.

Now, Cuff was a model husband and seldom stopped out later than was necessary, but Joe Purritt would not be denied. The best of husbands is only human, and an old friend is an old friend, just as a bottle of whisky is a bottle of whisky. William Cuff succumbed to the temptation.

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He remained with Joe Purritt for the best part of an hour, and in that time a bottle of quite drinkable Scotch was reduced to a "returned empty." While its contents were ebbing—if I may so express it—William Cuff told his old friend the history of his more recent fortunes. He broke the news that he was now married to the finest old sport of a girl in the three kingdoms—"a bit of all right, she was."

He told with gusto how his suit had been preferred to that of a policeman, who hated him in consequence. He recounted with chuckles how the policeman had tried to poison his beloved's mind against him by telling her that that Cuff fellow couldn't be getting his living honestly.

"None of 'em round our way knows how I makes my money," he concluded gleefully.

A ray of light fell upon him and a voice said: "'Ullo! 'Ullo!" . . . "Why, Lor' bless me!" exclaimed the rat-catcher. "If it ain't Jim Rogers — Mr. Police-Constable Jim Rogers, I should say." *[Page 540, col. 1.]*

When William Cuff eventually left the theatre with his bag of rats and straw—having made an appointment with Joe Purritt in the near future—he was extremely pleased with himself. He had done an excellent night's business, met an old friend, and drunk his share of a bottle of whisky. I don't mean to infer for one moment that he was in the least intoxicated. He was merely happy. He felt sprightly, boyish, enthusiastic, reckless. Even when he discovered that he had missed his last train, he said no more than a man might say who breaks his boot-lace.

There was a train on another branch of the line which would take him to another suburb three miles from his home. Accordingly he took it, and entered with his sack into a crowded third-class compartment.

At the end of his journey by rail he got out, shouldered the sack, and faced his three mile walk with a stout heart. It was a pleasant, starlit night, and William Cuff walked to the lilt of his own heart-beats. I think I mentioned that he was very pleased with himself.

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His way lay across a wide suburban common, and while he trudged, absently humming an air, he multiplied the number of his night's catch by what he had received and what he might receive, and added the sums together with a pleasing total. He had just recorded this on the tablets of his mind, so to speak, when a ray of light fell upon him and a voice said: "'Ullo! 'Ullo!"

Mr. Cuff came to a halt. The voice had an official ring in it. A fraction of an instant later he realised that he knew that voice quite well.

He looked into a circle of bright light like an enormous eye, and behind it, dimly silhouetted against the night sky, was the unmistakable shape of a policeman.

"Why, Lor' bless me!" exclaimed the rat-catcher. "If it ain't Jim Rogers—Mr. Police-Constable Jim Rogers, I should say."

It was, in fact, the self-same policeman whom he had spoken of to Joe Purritt. Police-Constable Rogers had been his unsuccessful rival.

The constable ignored the greeting.

"'Ere!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "Where are you going?"

"'Ome. Any objections?"

Police-Constable Rogers advanced two or three steps heavily and leisurely.

"What have you got in that there sack?" he demanded.

"Rats!" said Mr. Cuff.

It was the simple unvarnished truth, but it sounded more like a rude retort than a perfectly correct and proper statement.

"I don't want none o' your lip," the constable retorted. "What 'ave you got in that sack?"

Mr. Cuff drew himself up.

"That's my business," he retorted.

"Yes, your business an' somebody else's property. I've 'ad my eye on you for a long time, my fine feller."

"Wonder it 'asn't brought me any bad luck, then! Look 'ere, wot 'arm am I doing?"

"I'll soon show you. You just turn that sack inside out."

"Why?"

"Because it looks a bit funny like to me. 'Ere are you now, a respectable City gentleman—so you say—walking about with a sack on your back in the small hours of the morning. People 'ave allers been wondering how you made your living, but I knew all right, and now I'm going to prove it."

"Look 'ere," said Mr. Cuff, "this sack don't contain nothing what ain't my property."

"All right, you come along with me to the station then, and you can prove it—perhaps."

William Cuff shrugged his huge shoulders.

"If you tell me I've got to come I've got to," said he. "But you can't make me carry the sack. That's law."

It was, and the policeman knew it. He picked up the sack, cursed it for its weight, and flung it over his shoulder.

"Now, my lad," said he, "no runnin' away or any games of that sort. It wouldn't do you no good; and we'd 'ave you again before breakfast."

"'Oo wants to run away?" demanded William Cuff.

They hadn't gone ten paces when some of the rats began to squeak. Rogers, nearly dropping the sack, inquired hoarsely what the deuce that row was.

"My boots squeaking," said William Cuff. "I got new ones on. Cost me twelve and a tanner."

The policeman snorted.

"I suppose," he said, "that men as lives by picking and stealing thinks nothing of giving twelve and a kick for a pair of boots. All right, my beauty!"

It would be vain to reproduce any more of the conversation that took place between the men on their way to the station. It was, to put it mildly, of the cut and thrust order. At the station, William Cuff, all injured innocence, was brought before the Inspector, and the triumphant Rogers, already scenting promotion, made a lengthy statement.

He gave a verbal sketch of the cloud of suspicion in which William Cuff had always moved, how his means of livelihood had always been wrapped in mystery, how he had practically defied the Majesty of the Law to catch him out in any offence. And now, here he was at last, having been found sneaking across a heath in the small hours of the morning carrying a sack full of something, the nature of which he was unwilling to disclose.

Of course, there was but one thing to do, and William Cuff was led into a closed cell for the purpose of having his belongings examined. It was Police-Constable Rogers who had the joy of carrying out this order.

"Now, my old son," said he, taking out his knife and proceeding to cut the cord just above the knot, "we'll see what we've got here."

"I've warned you," said the suspect; "don't say I 'aven't. If you open that sack——"

But the constable had already done so, and was dipping in his hand as a child gropes in a bran pie.

The next moment he withdrew his hand with a yell, and dropped the sack. There was blood on his fingers. The sack lay open on the floor, and by twos and threes its occupants began to emerge.

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"I've warned you," said the suspect; "don't say I 'aven't. If you open that sack——" But the constable had already done so . . . . The next moment he withdrew his hand with a yell and dropped the sack.

In precisely five seconds William Cuff and Rogers were outside the cell and the door was closed.

"I warned you," said Mr. Cuff meekly; and the constable, cursing heartily and cherishing his bitten fingers, went off to report to an inquisitive Inspector.

The Inspector was more than a little annoyed with William. He said that it was dangerous to play tricks on the police. He wanted to know why the blazes William had not divulged the secret of the sack. To which William replied: "Why should I?"

"And now," said the Inspector, "you can set to and catch 'em again."

Then it was that William Cuff played his trump card.

"Not me! Not for nothin'! I gets paid for catchin' rats. You give me tuppence apiece for catchin' 'em again, and then we'll see."

The Inspector hesitated; he shot a malevolent glare at the abashed Rogers, and, telling William to wait, conferred with the other men on duty.

"It's no good," he said to them, "the blighter's done us. We'll never get 'em out of the place unless we pay him. Rogers is going to cost us something to-night."

William Cuff did not get twopence per rat for those he recaught, but a nice little sum was handed over to him, and he said that he was willing to make a reduction to oblige his old friend Rogers. He avowed that it was a pleasure to do anything for Police Constable Rogers.

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JACK TAR'S HALF-BROTHER

By H. C. Ferraby.

Working side by side with the old hands of the Royal Navy are men whose sea-going experience before the war was limited to a little yachting on the Norfolk Broads, or a trip round the Isle of Wight. These are the men of the R.N.V.R., whose exploits in all branches of naval work are graphically described in the following striking article by Mr. H. C. Ferraby, the well-known writer on Navy matters.

People often comment with an air of surprise on the fact that there are millions of men serving as soldiers to-day who never thought to shoulder a rifle or wear a Sam Browne belt. But how many ever think that there are hundreds of men to-day who are in command of British men-of-war who not only never thought of being naval officers, but never in their wildest dreams thought of going to sea? It is, nevertheless, a fact, and those naval officers "for the duration of the war" are at the head of a branch of the sea service that has taken thousands of landlubbers away to a life on the ocean wave, and has set the unmistakable imprint of the Navy on them so strongly that when you meet them in oilskins and sou'westers you might well vow at first glance that they had never been anything but naval men.

They are the officers and men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, known for short as the R.N.V.R. The Reserve was only the baby brother of the Service before the war, but to-day it is a strong and lusty fighting man with many great deeds to its credit.

It must be remembered that there are th

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main divisions of the personnel of the Navy. There are the officers and men of the regular Navy after whose names you put the letters R.N. Then there are the merchant seamen who serve in the R.N.R., or the Royal Naval Reserve. Lastly, there are the clerks, the singers, the yachtsmen, and the professional men who were not qualified by years of sea training to enter either of the other branches, but to whom the all-embracing term Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve offered a chance of serving the Empire afloat.

You meet them everywhere in the Navy, in super-Dreadnoughts, in torpedo-boat destroyers, in depôt ships, and, above all, in the myriad variety of patrol ships that keep open the lanes of sea-going traffic across the wide oceans and around our own coasts. There has been hardly a single dispatch from an admiral during the war that has not mentioned one or more R.N.V.R. men for gallantry. They have laid down their lives in scores, sometimes in the heat of a great battle, sometimes in a sharp little brush between single ships, sometimes, alas! in the too unequal contest with the elements.

One particular branch of patrol work has been placed almost entirely in the hands of the R.N.V.R. This is the motor-boat patrol. When this work was first given to them it was intended that the motor-boats should act principally as messenger boys for the ships of the fleet, and as scouts in shallow waters where torpedo-boat destroyers cannot move. The motor-boats of those days, however, have long since been outclassed by newer and larger designs.

There are now in service flotillas of motor-launches as large as a sailing barge, but much more lightly built, carrying a crew of a dozen or more with two officers. These launches are regular sea-going craft. There is a wardroom (or sitting-room) for the officers, and a small cabin with two bunks in it where they sleep. There is a galley for the cooking, and in the forecastle there is accommodation for the men, which, if it is not spacious, is not more cramped than was that in the ships that fought with Drake and Raleigh.

The R.N.V.R. men who run these motor-launches call them "movies." It describes them. They move—both by reason of their

A Volunteer seaman, who described himself as a painter, was set to work in this capacity. Discovering the man putting paint in every place but the right one, the Commander inquired what he meant by calling himself a painter. "I am," protested the Volunteer. "But I generally exhibit at the Academy." [Page 545, col. 2.]

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speed and by reason of a curious native wickedness that gives to them in a seaway a motion unlike that of any other craft afloat. If the sea is a bit high their antics are something like a streak of drunken lightning doing the goose-step. It is sometimes too bad for the motor-launches to stay at sea, but not often; and all through this past winter there have been many of our ports that have slept in peace and comfort while the motor-launches were out on night patrol.

The night patrol slips away from its moorings very quietly in the failing light of the winter afternoon. Gone are the uniforms of blue and the gold-lace stripes. Gone are the peaked caps. The commanding officer is a bulky figure in a yellow duffel suit with the hood hanging down over his shoulders. Beneath that he has on an old uniform coat, a sweater, and his ordinary under-garments. Between the duffel suit and the uniform coat there is wound round his neck a thick muffler. Between the uniform coat and his sweater there is a towel round his neck. When you see that towel put on it brings home to you the miserable wetness of patrol work.

His legs are encased in trousers, over which he wears a thick pair of fishermen's stockings, and over the lot there is a great pair of sea-boots that to the inexperienced appear to weigh a hundredweight.

It is going to be a nasty night, and on patrol one must be prepared before one starts. There may be no moment in the next seventeen hours when the skipper can safely leave the bridge.

The Sub-Lieutenant, having before him the prospect of being on deck during the night, as well as taking a turn on the bridge, has put on a long oilskin over his warm clothing, and his head is muffled in a knitted woollen cap.

The coxswain at the wheel looks more like the conventional seaman, with his sou'-wester drawn well down over his head to meet the upstanding collar of his oilskin; but the crew look exactly like a gang of pirates in every imaginable rig that will keep out the wet and the cold. The uniform regulations are quietly ignored when the night patrol puts to sea.

They stay out for seventeen hours, until breakfast-time the next morning, thrashing about in the darkness, never knowing when an enemy may open fire, always on the look-out for "blockade runners," for mine-layers, and for submarines.

That is one branch of the usefulness of the R.N.V.R. in the war, but it is by no means the only one.

When the Navy was fully mobilised in August, 1914, it was soon found that there were not enough officers in the regular Navy and the R.N.R. to staff the many auxiliaries that were called into service. Consequently, Volunteers were posted to all sorts of ships.

To-day, looking back over the record of the war, one is astonished at their adaptability. R.N.V.R. officers and men have been mentioned in dispatches for their work in the bombardment of the Belgian coast, for the landing at Gallipoli, for the battle of the Dogger Bank, for actions off the Syrian coasts, for fighting in a motor-boat on Lake Tanganyika, and for work as observers in aeroplanes in the Royal Naval Air Service.

The first R.N.V.R. officer to be mentioned in dispatches was Surgeon Probationer J. A. Stirling, of the destroyer *Meteor*, who received the D.S.C. for his services at Dogger Bank. Other Volunteer surgeons have done splendid work in the heat of battle, as, for example, Surgeon Probationer D. G. P. Bell, who amputated a limb single-handed in the dark in one of the destroyers at the battle of Jutland and was awarded the D.S.C.

The R.N.V.R. men have not been only hewers of wood and drawers of water in the big ships. Some of them have been entrusted with highly important duties. Thus, at Jutland, Lieutenant A. P. McMullen, R.N.V.R., was commended for ably carrying out his duties in charge of a 12-inch transmitting-station. This is a compartment in the bowels of the ship connected by telephone with the guns and with the range-finding instruments. The men in the transmitting-station receive ranges and orders from the range-finders and the gunnery officers and transmit them to the turrets. They work in a room that is a complex mass of voice pipes, electric indicators, and the great gramophone-mouthed Navyphones out of which the voices from far above roar out like bulls of Bashan.

It is a nerve centre of the ship's gunnery, and one officer who was working in T.S. during a certain fierce bit of work told me that it was so hot down there that, though the half-dozen officers employed were stripped to the waist, they were in a bath of perspiration.

The R.N.V.R. officers and men have not all achieved fame and proficiency without mishaps and comical mistakes. They tell a tale of one zealous young Volunteer officer who was just learning the rudiments of his job in a big ship, and had acquired at least one useful bit of knowledge—never to be flurried by any question, but always to make some sort of an answer when addressed by the Captain. He was on the bridge as under study to the officer of the watch one day when the Captain turned to him suddenly and asked:

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The ship was lying on her side, and her sudden settling down had thrown scores of people into the water. The motor-launches dashed in among the floating heads and . . . their crews, clinging desperately to the stanchions with one hand, helped the struggling survivors on board with the other. [*Page* 546, *col.* 1.]

"What's the barometer now?"

The Volunteer didn't know. But he burbled out happily:

"27·75, sir."

The Captain's eyebrows shot upwards for a second, and then he grinned.

"Really? How interesting!" he said. "The lowest reading on record is about 27·50, and then the gale was enough to blow the roof off the world. What is it really?" he added, turning to the regular officer of the watch.

"29·75, and dropping still, sir," came the reply.

The Volunteer discreetly faded away into the shadows at the far end of the bridge.

Another funny story concerns a Volunteer on the lower deck, a simple able seaman in war-time. When he joined his ship the Commander, who had to allot a job to every man, asked what he was before he joined.

"A painter," he replied.

"Let him join the mess deck painting party," was the order.

Later, the Commander, strolling round, saw this self-same painter manfully struggling to make his big paint-brush slap the paint

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properly on the bulkhead instead of on the mess deck or the crockery or himself.

The Commander's language was blue for a minute or two, and then he demanded:

"What do you mean by telling me you were a painter?"

"I am," protested the unhappy Volunteer. "But I generally exhibit at the Royal Academy."

Another well-known artist had a different kind of adventure. He was second in command of one of the "movies," and one blustery day news came that a ship had been mined just outside the harbour. Every ship that could put out was wanted for rescue work, and the "movies" went out at top speed, the waves slapping them all over the place.

The ship was lying on her side, and her sudden settling down had thrown scores of people into the water. The motor-launches dashed in among the floating heads, and wallowing over from side to side, their crews, clinging desperately to the stanchions with one hand, helped the struggling survivors on board with the other, or hauled at ropes to drag the half-drowned people out of the angry seas.

Suddenly a huge wave caught this particular motor-launch right on the beam, and poured in a cascade across her deck. The painter, who got the full force of it, was swept off his feet, and half a moment later was struggling in the water among the people he had been trying to save. It was half-an-hour before his Captain and the crew of the motor-launch could rescue him. In another motor-launch on the same occasion both of the officers and several of the crew were swept overboard in the course of the rescue operations, and struggled back on board their own ship with the greatest difficulty.

There is one more branch of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves' work that must be dealt with—the "Crystal Palace Army." The Royal Naval Division, which fought at Antwerp and in Gallipoli, was part of the organisation of the R.N.V.R. It was started under the Admiralty, and was actually controlled by the Admiralty for many months; but as it was used finally for military purposes solely, and the dual control involved administrative difficulties when the Division was sent to France to fight on the Somme, it is now part of the Army organisation, though it retains its distinctive title.

A certain number of commissions in the R.N.V.R., too, have been issued to men who possessed certain abilities not of a seafaring nature that it would be useful to employ for the Navy. This is particularly the case with regard to the blockade, where the advice of business men and lawyers was constantly needed, and the only way to offer them employment was by taking them on as temporary officers.

The R.N.V.R., in fact, is a most elastic organisation that can provide almost anything from the commanding officer of a warship to an admiral's private secretary. But in the main it is made up of fighting men, of men who have given up the ease and security of shore life to wallow in cold seas on a pitch-black night in a scrap of a boat with the galley fire out and no hope of a hot drink for hours. They are mostly men whose names you and I will never hear. They do their job as silently and as unassumingly as the regular officers of the great sea service to which they were admitted at first on sufferance and as a necessary evil, but in which they are to-day welcomed as blood-brothers, for they have proved themselves.

"SEND US THE 'ROYAL'!"

"You can imagine the eagerness with which the magazines from home are perused, especially magazines like the ROYAL, which usually portray some of the most beautiful faces in dear old England."

This is only one of the many appreciative comments of the fighting men who look to the ROYAL to cheer up their dull moments, and to you to see that they get it.

Your part is so simple. Just hand as many copies of the ROYAL as you can collect over the counter at any post-office, without wrapping of any kind, and they will be distributed among the troops to the very best advantage.

Remember Sir Douglas Haig himself wrote to urge all those at home who have been accustomed to buy books and magazines in the past to continue to do so freely, if possible in increasing numbers, and having read and enjoyed them to pass them on as freely for circulation among the troops.

"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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CHA CHA AND THE KITTEN

By James Francis Dwyer.

"Love hangs like light about your name,
As music round the shell."

Cha-Cha was wondrously beautiful. Her skin was velvety, cream-tinted, strangely luminous. Her hair, waist-long and abundant, held a sheen like that upon the underwing of the bird of paradise, and her lips, poppy-red, moist and passion-stirring, were the lips of Daphne that lured Apollo to pursue.

But it was Cha-Cha's eyes that arrested attention. They were big, laughter-filled, fun-seeking eyes, tinted with that wonderful blue that comes in summer-time to the seas around Ibiza. They were the headquarters of mirth, beautiful dispellers of gloom that made Cha-Cha the lovable, kittenish, joy-bringing thing that she was.

Cha-Cha had come from Urmia, away out beyond the White Desert. She was a present to a very great man in Erzerum, and she was packed up and sent off with a caravan that carried rugs and spices, beautiful carved things made from scented woods, and five-score pussycats, white with smoke-tinted ears and tails, the kind that bring big prices in the bazaars of Erzerum and Trebizond.

It was a wonderful journey for Cha-Cha. Days of magic when the shy winds of the desert—winds unused to human beings—touched Cha-Cha's soft cheeks and fled hurriedly, as if startled at their own temerity; nights of mystery when the stars swung low and their beams danced in the big blue eyes that looked upward as the girl lay listening to the noise of the camels and the singing of the men around the fires.

It was at the end of the journey that the camel boy gave Cha-Cha the kitten. The boy had purchased the pussycat with the little bag of coins that he had been saving for months, and he brought the soft, purring thing to Cha-Cha, a bashful look upon his sun-tanned face.

"She is like you," he murmured, placing the kitten in the arms of the girl. "She is sweet and beautiful and has big blue eyes; she will bring you good luck."

"She *is* like me," cried Cha-Cha, smiling up at the boy. "Are you sure that she will bring me luck?"

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"Certain," he answered. "Her mother had brown eyes and her father had yellow ones. Her eyes are blue, and that means that she will bring good fortune to her owner."

Cha-Cha put out her little plump hand, and the camel boy kissed it reverently; then as he stood watching Cha-Cha fondle the kitten, a fat, unwieldy man with a curious dead face came up and inquired for the girl.

"But you are not my master?" cried the girl, holding the kitten close and looking up timidly at the lifeless face.

The fat man made a curious sound that showed amusement at her question.

"I am the servant of your master," he said. "He is away, miles and miles away. I have come to fetch you to his house."

There followed quiet sunshiny days for Cha-Cha and the kitten, sherbet and nougat days. The two played in rug-covered rooms shielded by closely-latticed screens from the gaze of persons passing in the street below. The girl and the kitten couldn't see the passers-by, but up through the lattice-work came the soothing *swish-swish* of slippered feet, the *tap-tap* of the brass-workers' hammers and the sleepy calls of the street vendors.

During those days Cha-Cha would pause in her play and ask questions of the fat man with the lifeless face who ordered her food and bullied the soft-footed servants.

"When will my master return?" she asked one day.

"When they are all killed," he answered.

"When who are all killed?" questioned Cha-Cha.

"The Christians."

"Are they bad people, the Christians?" inquired the girl.

"They are devils," said the fat man. "We are fighting them."

It was nothing much for Cha-Cha or the kitten to worry about. They ate and slept, curled up together on the soft cushions. The camel boy was right about the kitten. She was like the girl—a playful, frolicsome little thing, content to drink her milk, sleep in the sunshine, and amuse herself by playing with the tiny gold bells on Cha-Cha's ankles.

On another day Cha-Cha questioned the fat man about the looks of her master.

"Is he handsome?" she asked.

The fat man looked cautiously around the room, then addressed a canary singing in a tortoise-shell cage.

"Is the rock snake handsome?" he asked the bird. "Is the green centipede handsome? La, la, la!"

"Is he kind?" asked Cha-Cha.

The fat man bared his arm and showed it to the singing canary. A scar that looked as if it had been made by a hot iron extended from the wrist to the elbow.

"Here is the mark of his embrace," he said, face turned towards the cage. "The jaguar leaves marks like these."

"La, la, la!" said Cha-Cha, imitating the fat man; then, being very young and carefree, the look of surprise went from her eyes and she started to romp with the kitten in the sunshine.

Then came the noises. They came to Cha-Cha and the kitten through the latticed shutters of the rooms. They were astonishing noises, dull, booming noises that shook the foundations of the old house.

The noises increased. The dull, booming sound grew and grew. And Cha-Cha listening on the latticed balcony, found that a new note had crept into the sounds which came up to her from the street. The distant thunder had accelerated the pulse beat of the city. The soft *swish-swish* of slippered feet that told of lounging ease was flattened out by the quick *plop-plop* of hurrying pedestrians. The street vendors' cries were throttled, the music died away, and up through the soft sunshine came occasional yells and screams that bred fear.

An air of horrible expectancy settled upon the town. Cha-Cha and the kitten listened intently, terror showing in the eyes of each.

Cha-Cha questioned the fat man.

"Tell me!" she cried, "what makes the noises, the horrible noises?"

"The Christians," he answered. "They shriek like that as we kill them."

"But the sounds are not screams!" said Cha-Cha.

"Yes, they are," he said, wagging his curiously-shaped head. "We are killing thousands of them. Fools in the bazaar think they are beating us back, but they are wrong."

Cha-Cha whispered the words of the fat man to the kitten, but the kitten gave no signs that she received any comfort from hearing them. And as the hours passed Cha-Cha began to doubt the fat man's source of information. The terrible rumbling noises were not the cries of frightened Christians. She was certain of that. And beneath her in the street, the street which she could not see, the seed of terror sown by the noises grew and blossomed. The screams of men, women, and children came to her through the lattice-work; the beat of flying feet was deafening. The whole population of the city seemed to be running, running madly as if to escape some terrible cataclysm that was approaching.

For hours Cha-Cha, holding the kitten to

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her breast, sat like a person in a trance and listened. Three times she rang her little silver bell, but no servant came in answer to her summons. She wanted milk for the kitten, the frightened kitten that meowed fearfully and snuggled close to Cha-Cha when the terrifying noises surged up through the green-painted slats into the heavy, perfumed atmosphere of the room.

The thunderous tumult welled louder. Louder! It was deafening! It crashed against the house, leapt through the latticed openings and pursued the fleeing silence through the empty rooms. Cha-Cha thrust her fingers into her ears and screamed. Where were the servants? Where was the fat man? Why had they deserted her? She buried her face in the cushions and sobbed loudly; the kitten licked her cheeks with a soft little tongue.

Noises came from the rooms below, horrible noises, a yell cut short in the middle, a scream that reached its highest note and died away in a choking gurgle, the crash of heavy boots in the passage.

Cha-Cha got to her feet and moved towards the door. There were noises on the stairs leading to her rooms. The owner of the heavy boots was coming up swiftly, evidently in pursuit of someone whose quick breathing came to the girl's ears.

Cha-Cha crouched against the wall. The silk curtain that hid the door-opening was thrust aside and into the room leapt the fat man, his mouth open, his eyes wide and frog-like. Death was upon the fat man. It sprang after him as he came through the door, a sharp, flashing tongue of steel that struck him between the shoulder-blades, and he stumbled forward on the cushions.

Cha-Cha, who had shut her eyes to blot out the sight, opened them and looked at the killer. He was a giant, a great big, fair-haired giant in a uniform of green embroidered with gold; upon his chest was a cross that flashed as the sunlight fell upon it. He had a lean, clean-shaven face with strange yellow and green-tinted eyes, and, leaning on his big sword, he surveyed Cha-Cha as if she was something the like of which he had never seen before.

For a full minute he stared at the girl; then he strode forward. Cha-Cha shrank back from him and he laughed softly. He put out a big, muscular hand, and the kitten, clasped to Cha-Cha's breast, spat spitefully and clawed at him. The kitten thought that the giant wished to take her from her mistress, but it was something else which the big man required at that moment. Upon the girl's neck was a large emerald, suspended by a thin gold chain, and the giant desired it. His fingers gripped the gem, and with a little jerk he broke the chain.

Cha-Cha cried out in fear, and again the giant laughed.

"What is your name?" he asked, speaking in her own tongue.

"Cha-Cha," murmured the girl.

"Cha-Cha," he said, rolling the name upon his tongue as if it were a sweet morsel that he desired to cling to. "And where did you come from?"

"From Urmia."

"So? They are very beautiful there," he said. "I saw a woman who came——"

He stopped abruptly and turned towards the door through which he had entered. Another giant, also in green and gold, had appeared at the entrance, and upon the second man's face as he stared at Cha-Cha was the same look of surprise and amazement that had appeared upon the first comer's when his gaze had fallen upon the girl.

For a moment the giant who had taken the emerald from Cha-Cha's neck, glared at the newcomer, then he hurled out an oath and pointed to the door.

"Leave!" he cried.

The man at the door continued to stare at Cha-Cha, and the temper of the other boiled over. He dropped his sword and sprang. His fist landed on the face of the man who had found it impossible to tear himself away from the fluffy vision crouching against the wall, and the second giant let out a roar of rage and grappled with the first-comer.

They were two big men and they fought like wild beasts. They tripped over the little sherbet stands, smashing them into fragments with their big boots. They cannoned against the lattice-work, splintering it with the force of the collision, their curses and cries of rage bringing blind terror to the heart of the watching girl.

Back to the door they staggered, locked together. For a few minutes they swayed backward and forward; then the first-comer, the man who had torn the emerald from the neck of Cha-Cha, lifted the other with a mighty effort and hurled him through the door and down the stairs!

Crouching like an animal the winner waited. A groan came from below; then, after a little while, Cha-Cha heard the sound of heavy boots moving slowly along the corridor beneath her.

The yellow-eyed man turned to the girl. He looked her over carefully, grunting now and then when he discovered fresh points of beauty, which made him understand why his brother officer had fought so madly for her; then, stepping forward, he picked up the

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emerald pendant that had been dropped in the fight, and, with clumsy fingers, he knotted the gold chain around the neck of the girl.

The Captain sprang from his hiding-place, and gripped the neck of the intruder——

"My name is Yagof," he said quietly. "I am called Little Yagof. I am a Captain of Cossacks."

There was blood upon his cheek, and Cha-Cha lifted a dainty hand and pointed to it. The giant laughed grimly.

"Nothing, my little one," he said. "Nothing t all."

He put out his hand and touched the girl's arm, but she stepped back from him, her big blue eyes fixed upon his blood-stained fingers. Yagof laughed. Stooping, he picked up a damask cushion, wiped his fingers upon it, and again reaching forward, he touched a braid of the wonderful hair that came down over Cha-Cha's breast in a great serpent-like coil.

"You are wonderful," he muttered. "I have never seen a woman more beautiful."

"You are one of the Christians?" asked Cha-Cha tremulously.

"Ay," he cried. "I am a Christian."

"Then you will be good to me. They told me at Urmia that the Christians were kind to women."

Captain Yagof considered a moment. He ran his muscular fingers through his mop of fair hair, and a perplexed look came into his eyes.

"Sometimes," he muttered. "Sometimes."

Three hairy brutes thrust their heads

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through the door, and Cha-Cha gave a little scream of fear. Yagof turned swiftly, hurled an order at them, and they fled hurriedly.

"Don't be afraid," he said, turning to the girl.

"But I am afraid," said Cha-Cha. "I am very, very much afraid. You are a Christian; please help me."

Captain Yagof again disturbed his mop of hair with his fingers. His eyes were upon Cha-Cha—Cha-Cha with the cream-tinted skin, the big blue eyes, and the poppy-red mouth.

"The Colonel," he said haltingly, "will not allow any woman to travel with us."

Again the curtain was pushed aside, and Yagof struck with the flat of his sword at the brutish face that was thrust into the room. The man stumbled backwards, crashed down the stairs, cursing and screaming as he fell.

"They are our soldiers," explained Yagof. "They hate the Turks and we cannot hold them. They are wild men."

Cha-Cha stepped forward and touched Yagof's arm. "Let me come with you," she cried. "Please! Please! I—I am afraid of the others!"

Captain Yagof rubbed the back of his head and looked around helplessly. The kitten meowed softly, as if supporting the plea of her mistress. From the street came wild cries of triumph, the blare of trumpets, the heavy rumble of the guns.

The curtain before the door swayed gently, and Captain Yagof sprang into an embrasure. The brutish face of the Cossack that Yagof had struck with the flat of his sword appeared again, and there was a look of fiendish delight in the soldier's face as his eyes fell upon Cha-Cha. He moved towards her, and, as she shrank from him, the Captain sprang from his hiding-place, and gripped the neck of the intruder.

—Cha-Cha, the kitten crouching on her shoulder, watched the struggle with frightened eyes.

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Cha-Cha, the kitten crouching on her shoulder, watched the struggle with frightened eyes. With his bare fists Yagof pounded the brutish face till the man screamed for mercy; then the officer roared out an order and thrust the soldier from the room.

"You are taking me?" cried Cha-Cha. "You have sent him for something?"

"Ay," he said, "I have sent him for my bag."

"Your bag?"

"Ay, you must travel in my bag. The Colonel, little one! He is a devil! You must hide in the bag, and when we have chased the accursed Turk into the sea I will talk to you. Here they come with the bag."

The Cossack who had been dispatched upon the errand, and another soldier, equally wild and uncouth, came into the room, carrying between them a huge bag of untanned calfskin. Cha-Cha had never seen such a bag. It was big enough to hold the wearing apparel of a whole family, and she stared at it in amazement as they put it down upon the floor and opened it.

Captain Yagof took up his sword and deftly slashed a hole in the side of the bag, leaving the flap of skin so that it would not be noticed. Then he turned to Cha-Cha.

"Get in," he said shortly.

"Into the bag?" cried the girl.

"Ay! See, I have cut a place so that you can breathe, but, by the bones of St. Catherine, don't let anyone see your face if you look through the breathing hole! Quick! We must be on the march in ten minutes! Throw away the cat and get in."

"But I must take my kitten!" cried Cha-Cha. "I must! Oh, I must! She is a lucky kitten!"

The giant swore in an undertone. A bugle call rang out above the riot of sounds, loud, insistent.

"Take her!" he growled. "Quick! There's the bugle! This is my servant. He will watch over you and bring you food."

Cha-Cha, her big blue eyes wide with fear, stepped into the bag and crouched down in it. The servant and the hairy Cossack whom Yagof had hammered with his fists closed it quickly, and for a moment Cha-Cha felt that she was being smothered. She groped madly for the breathing-hole as the two soldiers lifted her up. She thought she would never find it; then suddenly it was opened for her from the outside and Yagof spoke to her.

"I am a fool," he said gruffly. "A big fool. Ay, I am. If the Colonel sees you it is good-bye to Little Yagof. Be quiet, and, if you can pray, pray. The Colonel is a devil!"

The two soldiers moved down the stairs and Cha-Cha's fears increased. She wondered where they were going. Chasing the Turks, Yagof had said. Chasing them where? She wept as she was jolted backward and forward, and the kitten licked her face and nestled against her in an effort to comfort her.

The two soldiers carried the bag out into the street. Cha-Cha lifted the flap and peeped out. The street was crowded with men in green uniform, big men with great hairy faces who laughed and shouted and sang wild songs. One of them slapped the side of the bag, and the weight of his big hand nearly stunned the kitten, upon whose head came the full force of the blow.

Again the blare of the bugle rang out, and Cha-Cha heard the voice of Yagof urging the two soldiers to greater speed. They broke into a run, and she clutched the kitten and held her breath. She heard the rumble of a waggon, heard Yagof shout out an order, felt herself lifted high, then the bottom of the bag came down upon something hard and firm, and she was carried forward swiftly. The bag had been lifted on to an ammunition waggon that was moving at a hand gallop down the crooked street of the city!

Cha-Cha thought that she would go insane during the hours that followed. They were hours of agony, of torment. The ammunition waggon never slackened speed when it left the comparatively good roads of the town for the bad roads of the country. The driver flogged his horses, and Cha-Cha and the kitten were rocked from side to side. Once she lifted the flap of the breathing-hole with the intention of asking the driver of the vehicle to kill her, so that she could escape further suffering, but the face of Yagof's servant appeared at the opening, and he spoke softly to her.

"Be quiet," he whispered. "Do not be alarmed. We will camp soon."

The servant spoke the truth. The waggon halted, and the big bag was lifted off and carried to the shelter of some trees along the road. The servant opened it, and informed Cha-Cha that a tent would be immediately erected, and she would then be able to step from her hiding-place.

The servant was as good as his word. He hurriedly erected a small tent above the big calfskin bag, and Cha-Cha and the kitten, much bruised and shaken, and very, very much afraid, climbed out.

Captain Yagof's voice came to the girl's ears as she stood listening, the flap of the tent was drawn aside, and the lean face of the Cossack officer confronted her.

"Well, my beautiful one," he said, "and how did you like the ride?"

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"It was dreadful!" she cried.

He laughed softly. "Perhaps," he said. "But you wanted to come." He paused for a moment, then he added, his curious yellow eyes fixed upon her face: "And I wanted to take you."

She clasped the kitten tight and moved back from him, and Yagof laughed. Outside the hubbub increased. The noise of a hundred bugles rose like lariats of sound above the dull, rumbling earth-chained noises of gun-carriages and ammunition waggons.

"Where are we going?" gasped Cha-Cha.

"Where?" cried Yagof, his lean face lighting up at her question. "Why, we are going to chase the Turk into the sea! Listen!"

Again the penetrating bugle calls went up like whips of sound circling over the heavier noises.

"Listen!" repeated Yagof. "Trumpets out of Russia! Out of Russia, little one! Three score years of hate are sweeping us on and on! We are the people, the great people!"

He stepped towards her, and she shrank back. He was so big and strong and fierce-looking that she was afraid.

"Do I frighten you, little Blue Eyes?" he cried. "By all the little saints, you were made to love! Your eyes are as deep as the Caspian, and the braids of your hair were given to you to twist round the throat of a lover. What do these fools of Turks sing? Ah, I have it:

> Allah gave man two things worth while,
> A singing blade and a woman's smile.

"Ay, ay, ay! And I have a singing blade, a blade that my grandfather carried against the Turk in the Crimea. And now, bright eyes, you must smile at me! You must smile on Yagof, who is called Little Yagof, but who is stronger than any other man in the regiment."

His big hands stretched out to seize Cha-Cha. His eyes were alight with desire. His strong white teeth showed as the flame of lust passed over his fighting face.

"Little Cha-Cha, come to me," he murmured. "Come to——"

He stopped and straightened himself quickly. From without came the sound of galloping hoofs, then the mad splatter of gravel as a horse was checked suddenly. Someone called "Captain Yagof!" in a loud voice, and Yagof sprang through the flap of the tent.

"Coming, Colonel!" he cried. "Coming!"

Cha-Cha, breathing quickly, stepped to the flap, and, with one eye to a split in the canvas, looked and listened. The rider of the horse, a big, grey-haired man, whose breast was covered with decorations, hurled sharp orders at the Captain, then rode off at a gallop, while Yagof rushed towards the road where a company of Cossacks was mounting hastily.

"Oh, oh," murmured Cha-Cha, speaking into the soft ear of the kitten. "The Turks are coming back to kill us! Oh, what shall we do?"

The noise which had preceded the coming of the galloping Colonel was nothing to the tumult which followed. The earth quivered beneath the tread of galloping horses, big-throated guns coughed and roared, and a smoke pall drifted across the plain. The fleeing Turk had turned, and was battling hard with his pursuers.

Night came down, and the tumult lessened. A white-faced moon came up, and Cha-Cha, watching through the flap of the tent, saw the weary horsemen ride back to their camping-grounds. She watched for Yagof, her little heart beating madly.

He came at last, spurring his horse up the slope upon which her tent was erected. She saw him spring from his horse, refuse the food and drink which his servant offered, then, staggering like a drunken man, he dropped beside the fire, rolled himself on a rug, and slept.

From the other fires came scraps of conversation which Cha-Cha pieced together. The Turks had turned, but the Russians had crushed their attack, and they were again in full flight. And from the fires came stories of heroism, stories in which the name of Yagof figured. He had done wonderful things, and Cha-Cha thrilled as she listened. From one fire nearest her tent there came an invitation for the Captain. It grew into a full-throated roar. Five officers came running across the intervening space. They found the sleeping Yagof and tried to get him to his feet, but he cursed them roundly and begged them to leave him alone.

"He's tired," cried one, "and by the beard of my father it is right that he should be. He held the road with ten men against five score of them!"

"And he did more than the ten!" said another. "Ay, he did! When Little Yagof swings that big sword of his something happens."

They went away, and Cha-Cha whispered the news to the kitten. "He killed many men," she murmured. "He and ten others fought a hundred! A hundred!"

The shouting at the fires died away as the men one by one dropped off to sleep. From far away there came at intervals the boom of

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guns; a quick given challenge was snapped out occasionally by sentries in the road.

Cha-Cha did not sleep. She crouched at the flap of the tent watching Yagof, who muttered in his sleep. Once he cried out and, straining her ears, she caught his words. He had spoken her name, spoken it distinctly. It had stayed with him through the great fight!

Hours passed. The kitten slept in Cha-Cha's arms, but the girl did not close her eyes. She watched Yagof—Yagof, strong and fierce-looking, who with ten other men had fought a hundred.

It came to midnight. A cold wind rose up and rustled the dead leaves of the trees. And Cha-Cha, listening to the wind, detected another sound. Someone was approaching, approaching quietly, furtively. Someone was crawling on hands and knees towards the big fair-haired giant sleeping by the fire!

Cha-Cha's little heart threatened to climb up in her throat and strangle her. She did not dare to breathe. Her big eyes searched the inky shadows that the moonbeams herded beneath the trees.

Cha-Cha saw. A man was crawling towards Yagof. An enemy surely? She saw his *fez* distinctly when he lifted his head to calculate the distance between himself and the sleeping giant. And Cha-Cha understood. The man crawling towards Yagof was one of the wounded Turks that had been brought into the camp after the fight!

Cha-Cha acted promptly. Still holding the kitten she leapt through the flap and screamed loudly.

"Yagof!" she shrieked. "*Yagof!*"

The Turk rose to his feet and rushed as the big Russian flung the rug from him, but Cha-Cha was between the assassin and his intended victim. The girl threw out her hands to ward off the blow; there was a curious little animal cry of pain, a scream from the girl, then a quick grunt from the Turk as the Russian's sword fell upon him.

"Cha-Cha!" roared Yagof. "Are you hurt, little one? Are you hurt? Speak, girl! Speak!"

"He has killed my kitten!" wailed the girl. "He has killed my lucky kitten that the camel boy gave me!"

It was as Cha-Cha said. In her anxiety to save Yagof she had thrust out her hands that held the sleeping kitten, and the dagger of the assassin had ended the life of her little pet!

Yagof swore softly, kicked the body of the dead Turk, and gently soothed the weeping girl.

"Cha-Cha," he murmured, and there was a note of tenderness in his voice, "you lost the kitten, but you saved me, so I am yours. Will you take me, Cha-Cha? There is a priest serving as a lieutenant in my company, and if you say the word, Cha-Cha, he will marry us now. Little Blue Eyes, speak to me! Speak!"

It was dawn when the grey-haired Colonel came galloping down the road. He caught sight of Yagof and Cha-Cha standing side by side near the little tent, and his jaw tightened as he reigned in his horse.

"Captain Yagof," he cried. "I gave an order regarding women——"

"My Colonel," interrupted Yagof saluting, "this lady is my wife. She saved my life last night when a wounded Turk tried to knife me as I slept. She is from Urmia where all women are beautiful. Please allow me to present her."

SPRINGTIME.

They tell me that the primroses are nodding in the lanes,
That the banks are starred with violets, wet with soft, refreshing rains,
That the bluebells in the woodland are a sight beyond compare—
For it's springtime now in England—how I wish that I were there!

They tell me that the girl I love is creeping back to health,
That the spring has brought us treasure far beyond all other wealth,
That there're two to hold my heartstrings now, instead of only one—
And I want to be in England with the mother of my son!

Dorothy Rose.

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MY IDEAL HUSBAND.

Opinions differ as to what constitutes an ideal husband, and the views of the following well-known ladies, collected by Mr. Bernard Parsons, are sure to be full of interest. In order that both sides of the question may be considered, the humorous artists have been prevailed upon to give us their conceptions of an ideal wife.

Mr. Bert Thomas considers that cookery skill covers a multitude of sins, and that a domesticated wife is indeed a treasure.

THE HON. MRS. ASSHETON-HARBOARD, the famous Balloonist, and the first lady to cross the Channel in her own balloon.

I may be wrong, but, all the same, it is my strong personal opinion that the ideal husband has yet to be born—and even, perhaps, when he is born, he might prove exceedingly boring.

I wonder, too, would his standard of idealism be maintained for long? As it seems to me impossible to describe a being who has not yet seen the light of day I will not attempt the task—for, surely, in this case a discretion which prompts silence is the best policy?

MISS DOROTHEA CONYERS, the well-known Authoress.

My idea of the ideal husband is that he must be the one man you love, and he will always be ideal in every way to his wife. He must also not forget the cunning of speech he practised before he married.

A woman puts her love upon a niche high up in her mind, and as long as she keeps it there she is in no danger of finding out that, perhaps, the superior man may be intellectually her inferior, a fact which, once discovered, ends true content.

The husband who can keep love awake will always be ideal.

MRS. HALLIE EUSTACE MILES, wife of the famous Food Expert and Tennis Player.

I think that people rarely marry their ideal husband. For no woman can really form an ideal of the sort of husband who would make her happy until she has been married to him for some time. It is only after two people have grown into each other's lives

"The Real and the Ideal"—Esmond suggests that the man who is tied to a plain and jealous wife should guard against intrusion when he sets out to put his ideal on paper.

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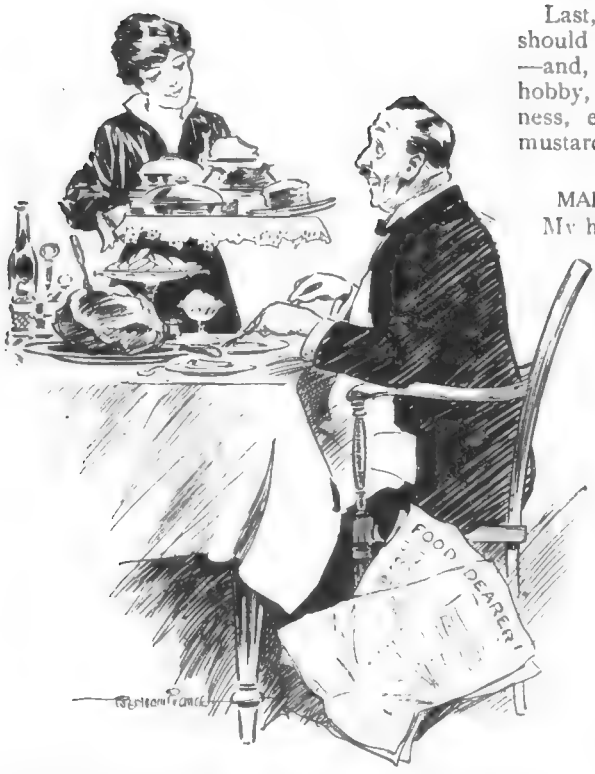

"A War-time Genius"—the wife who can in these days provide tempting meals without exceeding the Government allowance sums up, to Mr. Bertram Prance's idea, all the feminine virtues.

and habits and different temperaments, that they can say whether they have married their ideal husband or not.

I do not think that a woman ought to be shut out from her husband's business life, or literary work, or whatever it may be. I am sure that sharing everything together—the rough as well as the smooth—is what makes an ideal marriage.

MISS DOROTHY LEVITT, the famous lady Motorist.

I can't help thinking that to a very great extent, the ideal husband is, to most women, as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp. Happiness, however, in married life must, it seems to me, always be largely based upon sympathy.

My idea of an ideal husband, therefore, is one who is at all times reasonably in sympathy with his wife, who never fails to remember that, although she may have been married to him for years and years and years, a woman still fondly hopes that her husband will remain her lover.

Money, it is said, is the root of all evil. At the same time, I don't think that a man who is poor should be regarded as even a branch of that root, for some of the happiest couples of my acquaintance are those who are not at all well-off—well-off in wealth I mean.

Last, but not least, I think the ideal husband should be in sympathy with his wife's hobbies—and, of course, every wife should have a hobby, for hobbies are as essential to happiness, either to a man or a woman—as is mustard to beef.

MARY WEMYSS, the well-known Authoress.

My husband refuses to be described.

PHYLLIS DARE, the charming young actress who has won innumerable laurels in musical comedy.

First and foremost let me say that I consider that the ideal husband should be clever, and should possess quite his fair share of common-sense.

In view of the fact that it should be a contract to last a lifetime, I can't help thinking that a clever husband is an invaluable asset. Clever people are seldom dull—result, the woman who marries a clever man is saved years and years of boredom.

As far as personal appearance is concerned, I think this has little—in fact, nothing at all—to do with the case. Indeed, in my humble opinion, looks have nothing to do with "niceness" in a man. Money? Doesn't matter a bit, although, of course, the ideal husband should possess enough to make it unnecessary for his wife

Mr. Cottington Taylor is frankly mercenary and yearns for money allied to youth and beauty.

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to wonder how she can possibly make both ends meet.

MISS PAULINE CHASE, the popular Actress who has appeared as "Peter Pan" on over one thousand occasions.

I have been puzzling my brain for weeks to provide a satisfactory reply to this momentous question. And, at last, I think I have solved the difficult conundrum.

Nothing else matters so long as the ideal husband is—well, as the old woman said in

Mr. Reg. F. Smith's ideal wife will never be revealed to the public, since there are still people who consider classical garments unseemly.

hospital when the doctor asked her whether her husband was good to her—"more like a friend than a husband."

Friendship, after all, is one of the sweetest things in life; a husband who is a real friend must obviously be likewise.

PRINCESS BARIATINSKY, the Famous Russian Actress.

The ideal husband is difficult to find, and the finding of him, I am inclined to think, is very often the result of an accident.

"The Soft Answer"—a wife who realises that it takes two to make a quarrel and bears with her husband's ill-temper, holds first place in Mr. Thomas Henry's heart.

What is he like? His appearance matters not at all. He may be short and dark, or tall and fair. But at all times he will be full of sympathy and understanding.

All that a woman calls for is a man to lead her kindly, by his greater strength to make up for her lack of strength, and by his never-failing sympathy with her frailty, to make her feel that she is the one woman in the world he wants.

Mr. Alfred Leete is of opinion that an ability to laugh at her husband's jokes is the hall-mark of an ideal wife.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo *Howard Barrett.*

This is probably the largest gramophone in England. It is worked by electricity, and is used to entertain the wounded somewhere in the North of England.

A GIANT GRAMOPHONE.

Our wounded heroes have enjoyed (and perhaps occasionally suffered!) many and varied entertainments which have been brought about expressly for their benefit. Perhaps one of the most unique of these diversions is the giant gramophone which is being used for the entertainment of the wounded at a certain spot in the North of England.

This huge gramophone is probably the largest specimen of its kind to be found in this country, at any rate. The great size of the machine may be judged by comparing the height of the horn with the wounded warriors who are grouped around it. Although the mouth of the horn is occupied by one man, there seems to be ample room for another tenant, and if the volume of sound which issues from the machine is commensurate with its size, the warriors for whose benefit the music is brought forth, should certainly not find it necessary to clamour for front seats in order to catch every word of their favourite "rag." As for dancing, the machine would surely prove an invaluable asset in this connection; and there is much to be said for an orchestra that never tires.

The gramophone is worked by electricity, and was designed and made by Sir Charles Parsons.

THF FUEL GATHERERS.

Those of our troops who have been stationed in Egypt have been able to see many strange and interesting sights.

This ancient country can never fail to be of interest—even to the unhappy soldier who has had a difference of opinion with his sergeant!—and though many modern inventions have made their appearance, Egypt is still the land of the Pharoahs, and the peasants preserve many of their ancient customs—tending their cattle and sowing and reaping their crops in much the same way as their forefathers did in Moses' time.

One of the things to be seen daily—more particularly in the region of the Nile—is the gathering of fuel, a somewhat unattractive task undertaken by women, who sally forth on a fuel-hunting expedition each morning.

Timber is chiefly conspicuous by its absence in the Nile neighbourhood, therefore the natives find it necessary to procure a substitute. This generally takes the form of weeds plucked from the river-bank.

Photo *H. J. Shepstone.*

Egyptian women gathering fuel. This is a daily sight in the region of the Nile, and where timber is scarce, weeds from the river-bank are collected in its stead.

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A LUXURIOUS HORSE.

"Love me, love my horse" would be an appropriate motto for this officer, whose steed, during a voyage across the Mediterranean, on the way to "Somewhere," spent his days in comfort on the top deck.

In this pleasant situation, which afforded an extensive view of the ocean and the passing shipping, he probably felt a very superior being to his less fortunate brethren who were stowed away in quarters that would undoubtedly come off a bad second as regards sea breezes.

The somewhat lofty expression of the horse leads one to hope that the life of a gentleman of leisure will not spoil him for hard work when the time comes.

Photo Underwood & Underwood.

This favoured horse belonging to an officer, enjoyed the sea-breezes on the top deck of the ship during the voyage across the Mediterranean.

STRIPPING A WHALE.

The stripping of a 60-ft. whale sounds a somewhat formidable task, and not the sort of thing one would rush into lightheartedly.

This very fine specimen was operated on at Elley Bay, a Norwegian whaling-station off the coast of County Mayo, Ireland. The stripping process is done by machinery, the skin being gripped in a vice-like arrangement to which a long rope is attached, and the flesh or skin torn off by operating a steam winch—in just the same way, in fact, as cargo is withdrawn from a ship's hold.

The killing of a whale is highly skilled work, and also work which commands big pay. Nowadays, these creatures are killed by means of a special gun carried in the stern of the boat, and the most expert gunners are required, for there is only one spot in the head where a whale is vulnerable by this method. These gunners are engaged by the season, the contract involving the capture of whales above a certain size.

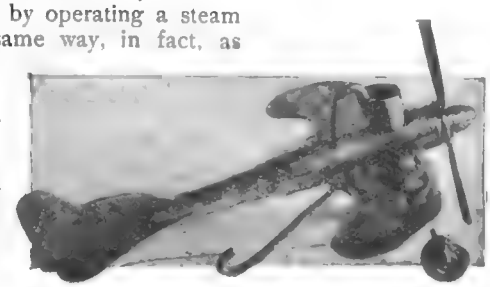

Photo T. Nicholls.

A clever model aeroplane made by a Belgian soldier. The aeroplane is made entirely from cartridges, parts of shells, and telephone wires.

AN INGENIOUS MODEL.

This clever model is the work of an ingenious Belgian soldier, and was constructed by means of a selection of ammunition.

The body of the aeroplane is composed of a complete Belgian cartridge, the planes and tail were produced from parts of a '75 shell-case, the propeller is part of a copper driving band from a shell, the wheels are made from the butt ends of Belgian cartridges, while the wires are strands of telephone wires.

Photo A. T. Cutler.

Stripping a whale at a whaling-station off the coast of County Mayo, Ireland. The stripping is done by machinery—the skin being gripped in a vice-like arrangement, and torn off by operating a steam winch.

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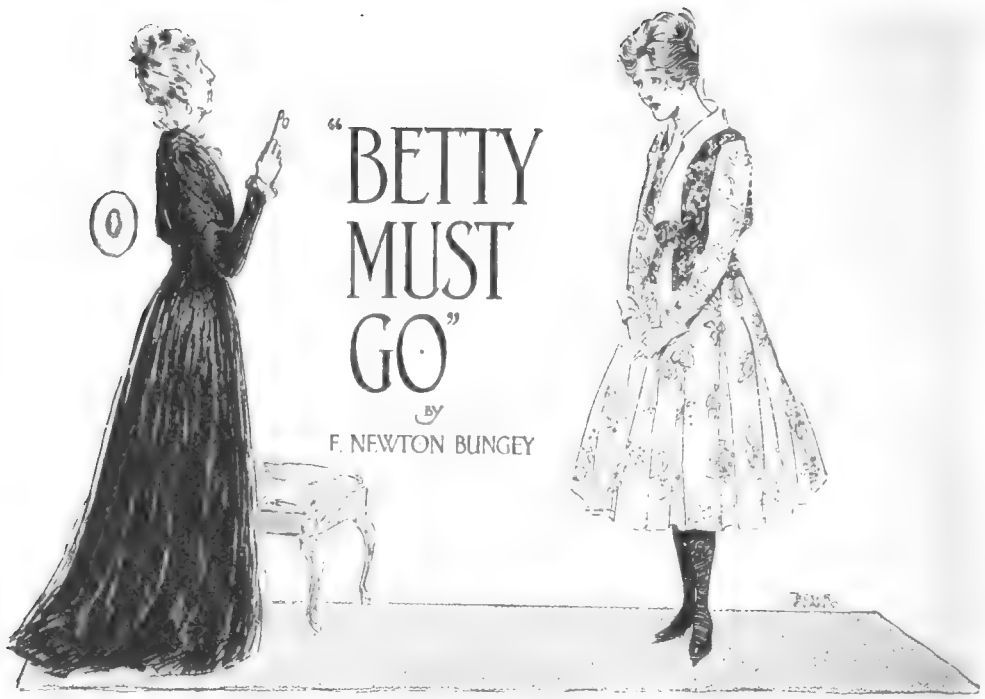

"BETTY MUST GO"

BY

F. NEWTON BUNGEY

"My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time . . ."

Betty Grayford stood on the platform of an unimportant junction, where she was doomed to wait nearly an hour. She had read all the advertisements of seaside resorts, and studied the glowing pictures in blue, gold, and scarlet which purported to represent these resorts, and she was unutterably bored.

"Why, it's Betty!"

Swinging round, Miss Grayford gazed into the vivacious face of Dolly Hepburn, whom she had not met since they had been at Girton together.

"Dolly! How gorgeous!"

Within a minute the two girls were strolling from end to end of the platform, their tongues working at colossal speed.

"Where are you off to now?" asked Miss Hepburn presently.

"Into a giddy world of gaiety," replied Betty.

"London?"

"No, Market Hampden."

"Good gracious! Where is it?"

"I don't know," replied Betty, "but occasionally a train wanders there, and I'm waiting for one now."

Observing her companion's puzzled expression, Betty explained that her small brother had come home from school and had developed scarlet fever. Mrs. Grayford had insisted on her daughter going away, and Betty proposed a visit to a bachelor-girl friend in a London flat, with whom she had spent many holidays. But Mrs. Grayford had a second cousin, Mrs. Forrest, a widow, living at Market Hampden, and she wished Betty to go there. In their younger days Mrs. Grayford and Mrs. Forrest had been chums, but they had not seen each other for many years.

"The weird part about it, old thing," continued Betty, "is that Aunt Matilda, as I am to call her, thinks she is going to give me a rousing time. As our home is in the country, she has conceived the notion that I am a country mouse, who will be simply overwhelmed by the wild gaiety of Market Hampden, which, I believe, has a population of nearly four thousand."

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"She should have seen you in a college rag," said Dolly, her eyes glinting with merriment.

"Oh, and I forgot, there is an added attraction in the shape of John."

"What is John? A dog?"

"John is a parson," explained Betty. "He is Aunt Matilda's only child, and he is the Rector of Market Hampden. He is also a bachelor."

The conversation drifted into other channels, and was maintained without cessation until the porter announced the arrival of the Market Hampden train.

"By the way, let me know if you want me as a bridesmaid," said Dolly, as the train began to move.

"Bridesmaid! What do you mean?"

"John!"

"Goose!" exclaimed Betty, her cheeks crimson.

After behaving in the usual eccentric manner of trains that wander, seemingly helpless and unwanted, along country branch lines, the Market Hampden train arrived at its destination. Betty got out and engaged a porter to look after her luggage, and whilst thus occupied an elderly woman came to her and asked her if she was Miss Grayford.

"Yes," replied Betty.

"I am Mrs. Forrest's maid, miss," explained the woman. "Mistress thought I had better meet you in case you lost yourself in the town."

It took five minutes for a cab to convey Betty and her luggage to the Rectory, and during the drive Miss Grayford saw most of the town.

Mrs. Forrest was in the doorway, and she greeted her visitor affectionately.

"So this is Hester's daughter!" she exclaimed. "You're like your mother used to be, my dear, but you are even better looking. Come in by the fire; I am sure you will be glad of a cup of tea after your journey. John is out visiting, but I expect him in soon. He wished me to apologise for his not being here to welcome you, but it is due to the exigencies of the clerical profession. There is so much to do in a busy town, you know."

Whilst she was speaking Mrs. Forrest led Betty into a comfortably furnished sitting-room and helped her off with her coat. She glanced admiringly at the girl, and then a rather shocked expression came into her eyes.

"Elizabeth, how old are you?" she asked.

Betty writhed secretly as she heard the unfamiliar name.

"Twenty-two, Auntie."

"But, my dear, you are too old to wear such short frocks. I suppose it does not matter in the country, but it is so different in town."

Betty gazed down at her pretty frock, the fashionable short skirt of which displayed her dainty feet and ankles.

"Perhaps you have some longer skirts, Elizabeth?"

"No, Auntie."

Mrs. Forrest's forehead wrinkled.

"I—er—I am thinking of John, my dear," she said a little nervously. "But—er—but perhaps he will not notice."

She glanced through the window as she spoke, and her eyes suddenly lit up.

"Here he comes," she said, as proudly as though she was announcing the arrival of the King.

Betty looked out and saw a clergyman walking with a middle-aged woman, who was talking volubly.

"That is Mrs. Grant," explained Mrs. Forrest. "She is the wife of the people's warden, and a great worker."

"Why, he looks quite old," said Betty to herself, studying the Rector's tall form with its rather stooping shoulders. The broad-brimmed soft hat he was wearing cast a shadow over his face, so that she could not discern it clearly, but she was glad to see that he was clean-shaven.

"Dear John is never alone," said Mrs. Forrest. "Our lady workers are very fond of him, and they are always consulting him."

A few minutes later the Rector entered the room, and now that she saw him closer Betty was agreeably surprised. It was the stoop which had given him the appearance of middle-age. He had a clever head, and the deep-set eyes proclaimed the thinker.

"My dear Elizabeth," he said in his best clerical voice, coming to greet her with outstretched hands.

"How awful!" thought Betty, her pleasurable conceptions swept away in one fell swoop.

The Rector sat in an easy-chair, and began to make inquiries regarding Betty's journey. Meanwhile Mrs. Forrest poured out tea, and carried a cup and plate to her son.

After he had exhausted the subject of Betty's journey, the Rector commenced to discourse parish news to his mother, but, as Betty noticed, it dealt mainly with the women-folk. Whilst he talked Mrs. Forrest waited on him, and he accepted her service as a matter of course.

"This man is being horribly spoilt," said Betty to herself. "Shall I be expected to pay similar homage? If I am, I think there will be some surprises in store for the Reverend John."

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When tea was over Mrs. Forrest asked her son what he proposed to do.

"I thought of taking Elizabeth to see the church," he replied. "She will be interested in the restoration."

"How good of you to give up your time," said Mrs. Forrest. "Er—you will put on your coat, won't you, Elizabeth?"

"If you don't mind, I'd rather stay in with you, Auntie," Betty returned, and then, seeing the surprised expressions on the faces of her companions, she added hastily: "You see, I have had a long journey, and I am tired."

"Ah, yes," agreed Mrs. Forrest, who was wondering what possible reason there could be for anyone to prefer her society to her son's.

"If you will excuse me——" began John.

Betty bowed instantly, her acquiescence being so ready that the Rector went out quicker than he had intended to, a rather puzzled expression in his eyes.

At dinner that evening Betty noticed that John received the best of everything, and took it as his due. He also monopolised the conversation in a slightly egotistical manner.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you, mother," he said, "Mrs. Grant and Miss Pilcher are coming to tea to-morrow. I asked them, for I thought they would like to know Elizabeth, and perhaps would find her some light parochial work to occupy part of her time during her stay with us."

There was no question of consulting Betty's wishes. The Reverend John had laid down the law and expected it to be obeyed.

Betty bit her lip, but managed to conceal her annoyance.

"It is so kind of you to think of it, John," she said, "but I must beg you to excuse me. I am a stranger here and have no wish to interfere in the parochial work. Of course, I shall be delighted to meet your friends."

John blinked, and then looked in a questioning manner at his mother, as much as to ask what curious sort of creature they were entertaining. She was in skirts, and yet she did not bow down and worship him.

In the drawing-room Mrs. Forrest made coffee in a patent Continental contrivance, and Betty could see that the Rector expected to be waited on.

"John!" she exclaimed, "would you be so kind as to pass my coffee?"

He was up in a moment, and Betty could not help realising that her words had revived his natural self, for he served her with a courtesy that bore no trace of his former manner.

On the following morning Betty wished to go to the post-office, and John proposed to accompany her.

"I will take you on to my church afterwards," he said.

"Will you?" thought Betty.

They set out, John raising his hat to passing ladies about twice a minute during the journey to the post-office.

"Now we will go to the church," said the Rector as Betty emerged and posted some letters.

"I am afraid you will have to go alone, if you don't mind," observed Betty calmly. "I want to go in here to buy quite a lot of things."

She indicated a millinery establishment, and, with a nod and a smile, she stepped into the doorway.

Somewhat perplexed, he moved a little way after her.

"Run along, John," Betty said. "See you later!"

She vanished inside, leaving the Rector more perplexed than ever. Never since he had taken Orders had anyone ventured to tell him to "run along." He felt that it was a severe blow to his dignity, and yet, as he remembered the charming smile Betty had given him as she uttered the words, he did not think that he was displeased.

"Probably she will follow on when she has finished her shopping," he said to himself.

But though he spent most of the morning at the church, pretending that there were things to be done there, Betty did not put in an appearance. At length he walked slowly home, wondering what had induced him to wait about all the morning.

When he arrived home he found that Betty had arranged to go for a walk with his mother in the afternoon, and so he was forestalled. He was not quite sure that he liked it.

Mrs. Grant and Miss Pilcher made the most of their opportunity at tea-time. It was quite clear that their object was to dissect Betty thoroughly, and to report on her. It was quite manifest that they disapproved of her good looks and fashionable clothes, and Miss Pilcher, a raw-boned, eagle-eyed woman of forty-five, dressed hideously, made a pointed reference to what she termed the immorality of modern fashions.

"Though," she added piously, gazing in a worshipping manner at the Rector, "I am glad to say that we of Market Hampden have not yielded to them."

Betty could not help glancing at the thick boots which hid Miss Pilcher's massive ankles. She regretted doing so immediately, for the champion of morals caught the glance and interpreted its meaning correctly.

"A minx, my dear," she said to Mrs. Grant, as the two ladies walked home.

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"And to think she is daily in the company of the dear Rector! But, of course, he can see through her."

After dinner each evening John carried Betty's coffee to her without prompting, and he waited on the two ladies at tea. Then came an evening when Mrs. Forrest went to bed soon after dinner, pleading a headache.

"You have not let me show you thoroughly over my church yet, Elizabeth," said John reproachfully.

"I never shall if you keep on calling me by that name."

"But, Eliz—er—um—it was given you by your godfath——"

"John! This isn't a christening service. I hate the name of Elizabeth. You must call me Betty."

"Betty!" he repeated frowningly. Then he said the name again and smiled, as though he liked saying it.

"And I'll call you Jack."

Before the Reverend John Forrest quite realised what was happening, he found himself holding Betty's hand, and whilst she hummed the melody, their feet were moving in time to it.

"Really, Eliz—er—Betty. I do not think I——"

"I won't do it in front of your Mrs. Grants and Miss Pilchers, only when we are by ourselves. I dislike John nearly as much as Elizabeth. You won't mind, will you, Jack?"

A smile lit up his face, making it distinctly attractive.

"Well, not when we are by ourselves," he conceded.

"Then I'll go and see your church in the morning," Betty said. "Now, can't we have some music? Do you sing or play?"

She sat down at the piano and commenced one of Tschaikowsky's alluring dances. Through a mirror she could see John tapping his knee and nodding his head in time. Then she observed him frown suddenly and drop his hand.

"Is that not rather light music?" he asked in his very best Oxford divine manner.

Betty swung round and laughed.

"Supposing it is, Jack!" she exclaimed. "There's no need for you to look like a funeral. It makes a delightful dance. Do you dance? You try."

Before the Reverend John Forrest quite realised what was happening, he found himself holding Betty's hand, and whilst she hummed the melody, their feet were moving in time to it, though it would be very difficult to say what particu'ar dance they were performing.

And the Reverend John Forrest was enjoying himself.

Suddenly, however, he pictured himself behaving in this manner before Mrs. Grant, Miss Pilcher, and the rest of his admiring flock, and Betty saw his form stiffen. Intuition told her what to expect, and she forestalled John.

"Oh, you make me quite breathless!" she exclaimed. "I must sit down."

She collapsed into a chair, and John stood gazing meditatively at her, with an uneasy feeling that he was rather a gay dog.

Betty was so different from the women he met day by day. She seemed to act on him as a tonic, so that he began to find the admiration of his lady helpers not exactly nauseous, but something approaching it. He knew the ladies who flocked round him did not like Betty, but he did not know that two indignation meetings had been held at Mrs. Grant's. There Betty was ruthlessly torn to

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pieces, metaphorically speaking, and so were her clothes.

"Positively indecent, I call it," Miss Pilcher had said. "Why, one can see a lot of her l——"

"Ahem!"

Mrs. Grant coughed loudly and gazed in pained surprise at Miss Pilcher.

"You are letting your feelings get the better of you, my dear," she said, "though I can quite understand it."

But Betty possessed one staunch friend in this assembly. She was a girl about her own age, and she simply ached to wear clothes like those worn by the Rector's cousin. She came to see Betty after the second indignation meeting.

"Oh, Miss Grayford, I feel so like a traitress," she said, "but I felt that I had to come and tell you."

"Tell me what, Miss Kemp?"

"They—they have been talking so much about you at Mrs. Grant's," faltered the girl, "and they say you are having a bad effect on the Rector. They say he is curt with them now, and he does not go out to tea so often, and it is all your fault, they think."

Betty laughed delightedly.

"So they have noticed the difference, too?" she said. "I'm so glad; it shows there's no doubt about it."

"The fact is, Miss Kemp," continued Betty, "the Rector is now treating them with ordinary manly courtesy, and he is no longer allowing them to make a little tin god of him. I am going to be quite frank with you, because I like you and you are different to Mrs. Grant and her friends."

"I never did care for them much."

"Well, this is what is happening," said Betty: "the womenfolk here had made the Rector a spoilt boy, and I have been working hard to make him a man again, and I've succeeded. He really is a fine man, a clever, brilliant man, but he was being spoilt by petticoat influence."

"Yes, I can see that," responded Miss Kemp; "but you have made enemies. Mrs. Grant, Miss Pilcher, and the others have talked of forming a league. Do you remember the people in Parliament being cross with Mr. Balfour and saying 'B.M.G.,' meaning Balfour must go?"

"Yes."

"Well, Miss Pilcher proposed they formed a B.M.G. league, but instead of Balfour they should use the name they have heard the Rector use."

"Betty?"

"Yes, only he always corrects himself and says 'Elizabeth' directly afterwards."

"So they want to drive me from Market Hampden?" asked Betty.

"That is what they hope to do."

Betty was secretly amused by the idea of the B.M.G. league, but she told herself that she would have her work cut out to fight it, if the ridiculous idea went through.

She soon found its influence at work. The Rector's lady helpers were very short with her, and she often came across them whispering mysteriously and gazing at her. Solemn-faced ladies in 1909 fashions would meet and say "B.M.G." to each other, and Miss Pilcher even went so far on one occasion as to wear a little label with the letters B.M.G. on it. But Betty had the pull of the opposition, for she was constantly in the Rector's society and she made good use of her opportunities.

One morning a letter arrived from Mrs. Grayford saying that Betty's brother was well again and she could come home as soon as she liked. Curiously enough, or it seemed curious to Betty, she did not want to go home. She did not attempt to analyse her feelings, but she put herself off with the idea that she wished to stay in order to continue her fight against the B.M.G. league.

By now, however, both Mrs. Forrest and her son realised what was going on, and each secretly condemned Mrs. Grant and her supporters. The Rector and his mother did not go so far as to discuss the situation, but they were both glad when Betty accepted the invitation to stay on longer.

It was Mrs. Forrest's custom to hold a quarterly tea-party for parochial workers at the Rectory, and one of these exciting events was shortly due. Then the Rector and his mother actually did discuss the trouble, and they came to the conclusion that it would be as well if Betty were not present at the tea.

When Mrs. Forrest suggested as much to their visitor, however, Betty put her foot down at once.

"I know they don't like me," she said, "but I am not going to run away from them."

"I wonder why it is they are behaving like this?" Mrs. Forrest said in worried tones.

"It is because I am more in touch with John than they are, and they don't like it," replied Betty.

Mrs. Forrest knew this in her heart, and secretly she was very pleased. She had grown to love Betty, and lately she had begun to hope that John cared for his cousin and that she returned the feeling.

Now Betty had two heart-to-heart talks, one with Mrs. Forrest and the other with the Rector. The result was that it was decided that Betty should act as hostess at the parochial tea-party. Mrs. Forrest was a chronic

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A little later on the Rector joined the party, to find Betty enthroned like a goddess amongst her late enemies. [*Page 566, col. 2.*]

sufferer with headaches, so she could easily plead indisposition, and, of course, the Rector always had work he could do.

On the afternoon of the tea-party, Betty, attired in her smartest dress, sat in the drawing-room awaiting the arrival of the guests. Beyond the fact that her colour was a little higher than usual, there was nothing to show the state of her feelings. Mrs. Grant was the first to arrive. When she entered the drawing-room and saw Betty, she paused suddenly, as though frozen. Betty went to meet her with a smiling face.

"How are you, Mrs. Grant?" she said. "It is so kind of you to come. Unfortunately, Mrs. Forrest is not very well, and I have to carry out her duties. Of course, I am scarcely fitted for such important work, but I do hope you won't mind. The Rector will be in later. He is busy on a sermon. He has to be so careful about his sermons, for he preaches to such a select congregation. It would not matter so much at most churches, of course."

Betty edged her victim to a seat, but did not give her a chance to get a word in edgeways.

"And how are those two darling boys of yours? What fine fellows they are! They look more like twelve and ten, than nine and seven. I could scarcely believe it when I heard the elder was only nine, though I thought how young you looked to have a boy of twelve. I have so often meant to come and see you, for the Rector is always saying he does not know how the parish would get on without you. And I do want your help, if you don't mind. The Rector has had his photo taken, and we want someone of artistic taste to select the best of the proofs. Do look at them, and say which you think is the best."

Mrs. Grant was smiling now, and telling herself how mistaken she had been. Clearly

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the Rector's cousin was a girl of great ability.

"Are you related to General Grant?" went on Betty. "You remind me of him so much. He and his brother, Lord Wessex, are great friends of my father, and last year, when I was staying at Lord Wessex's house, I often met the General."

At this moment Miss Pilcher came in, and froze in identically the same way as Mrs. Grant had done. Then she glanced in a puzzled manner at her colleague, who was beaming on the minx, for Mrs. Grant had decided that if Betty was good enough to be a friend of Lord Wessex, she was good enough to be a friend of hers.

Leaving the beaming lady studying the proofs, Betty hurried to the other end of the room and went through the rigmarole of the "select congregation" and all the rest of it again. She spoke softly, so that Mrs. Grant could not overhear, and then she dropped her voice to a still lower, more confidential pitch.

"Oh, Miss Pilcher, I did hope you would come this afternoon, for I do so want you to tell me something. I hope you won't think it impertinent of me, but that green costume you wore at church last Sunday so caught my eye. Would you mind telling me who made it for you?" (The bright green costume, the skirt of which hung six inches lower at the back than at the front, would have caught any eye.) "You know, I always envy people who know how to dress," went on Betty. "Would you mind telling me where you got it?"

Miss Pilcher was beaming now, and in confidential tones she gave the address of the criminal who was responsible for the emerald atrocity.

"Thank you so much," said Betty. The Rector noticed your costume, too, and he kept on talking about it at dinner."

Miss Pilcher beamed more than ever, but she would not have done so had she known just what the Rector had said.

"I do hope you will help me this afternoon," Betty continued; "it is so awkward for a girl like me to entertain people of your standing, but with someone like you to tell me what to do I am sure it will be a success."

Miss Pilcher capitulated completely, and presently Betty and her two companions were hobnobbing like old friends. Now the other parish workers sailed in, with decks cleared for action, so to speak, but they buckled and drifted helplessly at once before the heavy fire of Mrs. Grant and Miss Pilcher. A little later on the Rector joined the party, to find Betty enthroned like a goddess amongst her late enemies.

"A nice girl, that Betty Grayford," said Miss Pilcher, as she and Mrs. Grant walked away. "The sort of girl that wants knowing, though, of course; I confess I was quite mistaken in her."

"So was I!" exclaimed Mrs. Grant. "She was chatting to me about her friend Lord Wessex, with whom she often stays. She met a General Grant there who I think is a relative of mine."

Back at the Rectory, John Forrest was gazing wide-eyed at his cousin.

"How did you do it, Betty?" he asked.

"Oh, a little friendly chat clears away many difficulties," she replied evasively.

"Mother cannot manage them like that, and I certainly cannot," he said. "I don't know what we shall do when you leave us."

Betty was silent.

"Need you leave us?" the Rector asked suddenly. "Can't you stay with us always?"

"Oh, Jack, I'm sure your mother doesn't reckon on giving me a home for life."

"But I could," he said eagerly. "I don't want you to go, Betty. I can see now how I was drifting till you pulled me up. Won't you stay and help me, dear? I care so much for you, Betty, I do—I—I do really."

She did not answer, and his deep-set eyes began to cloud over.

"Betty, I—I love you," he said.

"Ah!" she whispered, "that was what I was waiting for you to say."

"You were!" he cried, taking her hand in his.

She came a step nearer to him.

"I shan't make a little tin god of you, Jack," she said; "I warn you."

"But I'll make a Queen of you!" he exclaimed impulsively, and then drew her close to him.

BOTTOMLEY AT HIS BEST.

"Does an Heroic Death Wipe Out Past Misdeeds?" is the title of Horatio Bottomley's stirring article on page 516. Don't miss it. It is one of the best things Mr. Bottomley has ever done.

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A Pair of Mittens

by "Taffrail"

In the following vivid little sketch "Taffrail" chronicles the experiences of a "lonely" Sub-Lieutenant who sought solace in correspondence with a member of the fair sex. "Bunny" Little is a delightful youth, and conducts his love affairs with the same dash and enterprise that characterise his rule over the gun-room, the atmosphere of which is so graphically depicted by the author.

I.

"Bunny" Little, Sub-Lieutenant, R.N., the senior member of the gun-room mess of H.M. Battleship *Prince Edward*, and the mentor, corrector, and ruler of the destinies of fourteen other young gentlemen, otherwise "crabs" or "dog's-bodies," otherwise Midshipmen scarcely younger than himself, had no girl friend of about his own age to take an interest in him.

By nature he was anything but a woman-hater, and it was certainly no fault of his that he had not formed some sort of a friendship, platonic or otherwise, with a "long-haired-pal." The omission may possibly have been due to the fact that he was an only child, and had no sisters to get friendly with and to introduce him to other people's sisters, but more probably because, when the war started, he was abroad on a foreign station where eligible girls of his own nationality were as rare as fruit on a raspberry bush in December.

He had the usual quota of kind aunts, some of whom, generous and fairly opulent, occasionally rose to the scratch when he wrote and told them as an interesting piece of news that the winter nights in the North Sea were bitterly cold without a cardigan jacket, that his servant had broken his new vacuum flask, or that some "silly ass" of a junior snotty had inadvertently sat upon and destroyed six of their newest gramophone records. But aunts, though useful in their way, were not everything, and did not fill the gap in his susceptible and aching heart.

Moreover, it annoyed him and made him green with envy when certain of his messmates entered into regular correspondence and sometimes exchanged photographs with other people's pretty sisters. Nobody's pretty sister took a fancy to him. His letter-rack in the gun-room was never filled to overflowing with thick, interesting-looking envelopes addressed in obviously feminine handwriting. It seemed to be the fashion to have some long-haired admirer. Even the junior snotties had their best girls, and spent many happy hours in concocting long and affectionate epistles for their benefit. He, the Sub-Lieutenant, the senior member of the mess, had nobody at all. It was really beyond a joke.

Bunny stood it for some time, but at last determined he would stand it no longer, and hit upon a scheme—a scheme which savoured strongly of frightfulness—whereby he also should receive letters. Accordingly, one evening after dinner he directed the "crabs" to muster in the gun-room.

"I've sent for you young fellows," he started in his most official manner, standing at the head of the table with a pencil and a piece of paper before him—"I've sent for you to tell you that in future any photos of ladies under thirty which you may receive are to be censored."

The "crabs" opened their mouths in mute astonishment and wondered what was coming next.

"I," Bunny continued, "am the Chief Censor, and if anybody gets a photograph of a lady under the age I mentioned, it is to be brought to me for inspection and approval. If I consider it is suitable, the recipient will be allowed to stick it up inside the lid of his chest. But," he added sternly, "if any 'crab' receives a photo of a lady, other than a relation, who I consider is horse-faced, that 'crab' shall promptly receive half-a-dozen of the best. I'm determined to keep up the reputation of the ship. D'you all understand?"

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The "crabs" looked at each other rather timidly and said that they did.

"You may also have noticed," went on the exponent of frightfulness, "that I never get any letters except bills and other uninteresting things of that kind. Such a condition of affairs is deplorable — most deplorable—and——" He suddenly looked up to notice one young gentleman sniggering.

"Molyneux!" he said, "this is no laughing matter. You will provide yourself with your own walking-stick and report yourself to me at eleven forty-five to-morrow morning."

The smile vanished.

"I have decided," Bunny resumed, glaring fiercely, "that one of you 'crabs' is to write me a love-letter every week. I have put your names down on this list in alphabetical order, so Annesley will write the first letter, Carfax the second, and so on."

"But I can't write a love-letter, Little!" protested Annesley, a modest youth of solemn appearance. "I don't know what to say!"

"The sooner you learn, the better, my son. If your effusion isn't sufficiently loving, you know what to expect."

"But how can we——?" from everybody at once.

"Shut up!" shouted the Sub. "How the dooce can I expound my scheme in this deafening uproar? The letters are to go through the post in the ordinary way, and unpunctuality in their receipt is another sin which will be punished with the utmost rigour of the law. You, Annesley," he added, turning on that unfortunate youth, "had better start in on writing yours straight away. I shall expect it before Tuesday week."

"But please tell me, Little," the junior snotty queried nervously, "am I to—er—I mean to say, are you supposed to be the girl I am writing to, or——?"

"I a girl!" roared Bunny. "Certainly not! What the devil d'you mean? Are you trying to be impertinent? 'Cos if you are I'll jolly soon show you that that won't pay."

Annesley, quite guiltless of any evil intent, became covered with confusion and purple about the face.

"I'm awfully sorry, Little," he stammered. "I'm sure I didn't mean to be impertinent. But, please, am I to write to you as if you were the girl?"

"No, you fathead! No! You're the young woman writing to me, and if your letters aren't up to the mark, I'll——!" He glared at him ferociously.

The inspection and censoring of the photographs fell rather flat, for the "crabs," alarmed lest their friends and relations should be thought "horse-faced," and they themselves should suffer in consequence, implored that photographs of any kind should not be sent to them. The love-letters, however, unsatisfactory substitutes though they may have been from Bunny's own point of view, certainly helped to keep the gun-room officers cheerful. In fact, when the "crabs'" effusions were read out before the assembled mess after dinner and judgment was passed upon them, the proceedings were always hilarious, sometimes riotous, for the "young ladies" themselves, mindful of the sword of Damocles suspended over their heads, rarely erred on the side of being too reserved. Two samples, and two only, must suffice:

DEAR SIR (wrote Carfax in a spirit of dare-devilry which he afterwards regretted): My father and mother have directed me to inform you that they do not approve of our friendship being continued, so I have the honour to return herewith the various presents which you have so kindly given me, viz., one rolled gold locket and neck-chain, one pair of imitation turquoise ear-rings, one nickel-plated wrist-watch, and one imitation silk muffler.

My parents wish me to inform you that they do not desire you to darken our doorstep any more, and I myself must add that I do not think that you are a fit companion for a young and innocent maiden like myself. Any further communications I may receive from you will be returned unread and carriage forward.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
ERMYNTRUDE FITZGUBBINS.

Carfax's official phraseology was a little mixed, but the darkening of the doorstep and the imitation jewellery did the trick, for when the letter was read aloud he was unanimously sentenced to condign punishment.

The meek and stolid Annesley surpassed himself.

MY ONE AND ONLY DARLING BOY (he wrote): Last night I cried myself to sleep with your letter under my pillow. My heart yearns for you, and my eyes are salt with tears. I long to hear your gentle voice again, but, alas! many leagues of earth and sea now separate us. You are the light of my eyes, and the one and only man in this world I would trust with my life and soul. I will be true to you, whate'er betide.

While you, a gallant lad in navy blue, are nobly fighting for your country, I, your Evangeline, am sitting at home at my fireside knitting socks with tears of happiness welling from my eyes. My heart goes out to you, and, though we may be parted temporarily, I am not the sort of girl . . .

(We may omit the rest. There were two whole pages of it.)

"What d'you think of that?" Bunny asked the Assistant-Paymaster when the letter had been read aloud.

"Rotten!" opined the A. P. "Absolutely rotten! I wouldn't have any truck with a

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"I have decided," Bunny resumed, glaring fiercely, "that one of you 'crabs' is to write me a love-letter every week. I have put your names down on this list in alphabetical order, so Annesley will write the first letter, Carfax the second, and so on."

girl who wept on her pillow and all over the socks she was knitting for me. I should——"

"Beat her?" suggested the Sub.

The A.P. nodded.

So Annesley also was chastised, though not really hard. But he was not the only one. All the "crabs" were chastised at one time or another. It may have been "frightfulness," but it did them no harm, for, as Annesley himself pointed out: "For every sin I have been beaten for, there are quite twenty more the Sub knows nothing about. Thank heaven!"

There was some truth in the statement.

II.

Any naval officer will tell you that, with the approach of winter, fully half the female population of the United Kingdom, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, *fiancées*, "best girls," and even unattached and unknown ladies of all ages, shapes, sizes, and descriptions, set to work feverishly to manufacture socks, comforters, mittens, jerseys, and body-belts for their soon-to-be-frostbitten soldiers and sailors. All the more power to their nimble fingers, for the warm knitted garments generally come at a time when they are particularly welcome.

The *Prince Edward*, like most other ships of the British Navy, received her fair share of presents. Mail-bag after mail-bag disgorged its bulbous-looking parcels of knitted woollen garments for officers and men. They came not only from relations and friends, but also from the Ladies' Emergency Committee of the Maritime League; the Mudley-on-Splosh Temperance Association; the ladies of the Llanidloes branch of the Band of Hope, if there is such a thing; and the teachers and children of the Caxton Sunday Schools, per the Reverend Barnabas Willis, B.A. Fruit, peppermint-drops, cigarettes, parlour games, books, and parcels of magazines also came rolling home like fowls at feeding time, but they have nothing to do with our story.

It was during the distribution of one parcel of presents, however, that Bunny Little found himself the possessor of a pair of

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blue woollen mittens. They were excellent mittens, everything that mittens should be, and had a small silver-paper horseshoe sewn on to them for luck, as well as a card with the donor's name and address. "With every good wish to one of our gallant sailors in the North Sea from Miss Ruth Trimkin, 23 Grosvenor Mansions, Hyde Park, London, W."

The recipient promptly set himself to pen what he considered a suitable acknowledgment.

DEAR MISS TRIMKIN,

I have just received your very kind present of a pair of mittens. They are the very things I wanted, and will keep me warm and comfortable during the cold and arduous watches in the North Sea. Unfortunately, we have not yet met the enemy face to face, but when we do—(here he paused for inspiration and thoughtfully sucked his pen)—I shall be wearing your mittens, and my thoughts will be with you. With many more thanks for your kind and useful gift,

I am, yours very gratefully,
ROBERT LITTLE, Sub Lieutenant R.N.

Bunny, I grieve to say, wrote this letter with his tongue partly in his cheek. Instead of his thoughts during battle being with Miss Trimkin and her mittens, it would have been more to the point if he endeavoured to concentrate his mind on the business in hand, that of discomfiting the Hun. What he said may, of course, have been simply his way of talking, but whatever it was it evidently pleased the lady, for within a fortnight came her reply, this time on stamped, expensive notepaper.

DEAR SUB-LIEUTENANT LITTLE,

It is very gratifying to me that you appreciate my little gift so much, and I am happy to think that it has safely reached one of our gallant lads in navy blue.

Having read so far, Bunny blushed rosily, and glanced round to see that nobody was looking. Nobody was.

As you say your watches at night are cold and arduous (he read on), I am sending you by parcels' post one knitted muffler and six pairs of socks, and hope they will be useful to you. I shall be interested to hear of their safe arrival.

Yours sincerely,
RUTH TRIMKIN.

"George!" Bunny soliloquised. "I do believe she's taken a fancy to me!"

"What's that?" queried the A.P., looking up from a letter.

"A girl's sending me a muffler and half-a-dozen pairs of socks," said the Sub, pocketing the letter hastily lest the ribald A.P. should ask to read about the "gallant lads in navy blue." "Her name's Ruth, Ruth Trimkin, and she lives in Grosvenor Mansions. You know, not far from Hyde Park."

"H'm," murmured the representative of the accountant branch. "Grosvenor Mansions. I know them well. Pretty swagger neighbourhood." (Heaven forgive him. He had hardly been to the metropolis more than a dozen times, and then usually to the pantomime or the dentist.)

"What's her name?" he inquired. "Ruth what?"

"Ruth Trimkin."

"Age?"

"Youngish," said Bunny with a satisfied grin, having quite made up his mind on this point. "About twenty to twenty-three, I should think."

"Is she well off?"

"Stinks of money," nodded Bunny. "She's got her own car, and all that sort of thing, and has fluffy brown hair, blue eyes, rather a turn-up nose, and wears one of those accordion-pleated skirts and silk stockings."

"The deuce she does!" observed the A.P. "I say, old chap, you might introduce me next time we're in town together?"

"I'll be shot if I do," the Sub laughed, leaving the gun-room and retiring to his cabin to continue the correspondence.

III.

Bunny, always a person who seized his opportunities, soon consolidated his position with his newly-found acquaintance. Indeed, if anything he assumed the offensive, for the letters between them became more and more frequent, and, so far as the Sub was concerned, less and less platonic.

Even the heart of the fluffy-haired, accordion-pleated Miss Trimkin seemed to have been touched, for at the end of three months she was addressing her sailor admirer as her "dear boy," and signed herself his "very sincere friend."

One could hardly blame Bunny. For months he had lived in the midst of men and ships in a northern, wind-swept base, with bleak, inhospitable shores in which the cheerful flutter of a petticoat never gladdened his tired eyes. Some people might say that Miss Trimkin, however, should have known better, but—well, many strange things happen in war-time.

But whatever the rights and wrongs of the case the friendship prospered, and before very long the steady stream of letters was being punctuated by occasional presents. Bunny sent his lady-love a ship's cap-ribbon, a gold brooch in the shape of the *Prince Edward's* crest, and several snapshots of himself braving the elements and defying the Hun in muffler, sea-boots, and *the*

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"I beg your pardon," he stammered, "but are you Miss Trimkin?" The lady turned. "It must be Mr. Little!" she exclaimed, smiling.
[*Page 572, col. 2.*]

mittens, to which kind attentions Miss Trimkin responded with two tins of home-made toffee, one large plum-cake, a wrist-watch as a *quid pro quo* for the brooch, but no photograph.

The "crab's" love-letters ceased abruptly, much to the joy of those young gentlemen themselves, while it was remarked by his messmates that Bunny became more and more preoccupied. At times he was observed to sigh deeply and to gaze towards the horizon for minutes at a time with a lovelorn look in his blue eyes. He shaved off an incipient beard of which he was unduly proud, and instead of leading a riotous life in the gun-room spent most of his leisure in indicting long letters in the privacy of his cabin. Only the ship's censor and Miss Trimkin knew what those letters contained, and the censor, though he smiled when he read them, remained as mute as the proverbial Sphinx.

There was not the least shadow of doubt about it. Bunny was badly smitten.

Six long months passed before the *Prince Edward* was ordered to a certain port to undergo her periodical refit and to give some well-earned leave to her officers and men. Bunny could have hugged himself for sheer joy, for even though it would be incumbent upon him to spend a certain portion of his leave at his own home, he would manage to pass forty-eight hours at least in London.

Perhaps, if he were very tactful, the beautiful Miss Trimkin would even be able to

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induce her parents to ask him to stay with them at Grosvenor Mansions. Perhaps, on the other hand, he would have to stay at an hotel, but whatever happened he would see quite a lot of her, and the joyful anticipation of going about London with a young and pretty girl was almost more than he could bear.

There was one fly in the ointment, however, just one. Miss Trimkin had not mentioned her parents in any of her letters, but it occurred to Bunny that a mother might wish to accompany her daughter on their excursions. Perhaps, though, Mrs. Trimkin, if she existed, was broad-minded enough not to believe in chaperones, and even if she were not he might be very diplomatic and satisfy her notions of propriety with a courtesy lunch and *matinée*. One never knew one's luck.

He mapped out every moment of that delicious forty-eight hours in his mind. He would arrive in London at about noon and arrange a rendezvous. Then he would take her—and her mother if she insisted on coming—to lunch at some very *recherché* restaurant. After that a *matinée*, then tea, then a cosy chat, followed by a dinner at another restaurant (or at Grosvenor Mansions if he were invited), then the latest revue, and supper at the Savoy.

The next morning he would arrange to be called at ten o'clock and to have breakfast in his room, after which he would take a constitutional in the Park with Miss Trimkin; more lunch, the war pictures at the Scala during the afternoon; more tea, more cosy chats, and another theatre in the evening.

He would have the time of his life, and, if the accomplished Ruth was the divinity he felt quite certain she was, he might even ask her to marry him then and there, in which case they might go to his home together as a lawfully engaged couple.

All went well, and at last the battleship arrived at her refitting port. Bunny, who was to go on leave early the next day, spent many agitated hours in sending telegram after telegram, and late that evening received a reply, which sent him into the seventh heaven of delight.

Will meet you rendezvous King's Cross (the wire said). Wearing black hat, white wing. Brown musquash coat.—TRIMKIN.

The next morning, at 11.53 a.m. precisely, Bunny disembarked from the train at the London terminus, placed his luggage in the cloakroom, and cautiously approached the bookstall, which had been arranged as the meeting place. Now that the time had come he felt strangely nervous, far worse than if he were going to the dentist.

He hove in sight of the bookstall and sighed deeply, for there she was, bless her pretty heart! musquash coat, black hat, white wing, and all. Her back was turned towards him, and she was idly looking over the magazines and papers spread out for sale. Her figure was neat and trim. Her feet were deliciously small; her back view was altogether delightful, and he slowed up for a moment to admire it.

Then, summoning up his courage, he advanced nervously and coughed.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered, "but are you Miss Trimkin?"

The lady turned. "It must be Mr. Little!" she exclaimed, smiling. "I am so pleased to meet you. I was at school with your dear mother thirty years ago!"

The age of Bunny's female parent was forty-seven!

(Another delightful naval sketch by "Taffrail" appears next month.)

THE PHOTOGRAPHS.

When first the Captain came to stay
In our best front room (three shillings a day!)
He ranged about the fireplace
Gaby Deslys and Pauline Chase.
Florence Smithson and Phyllis Dare,
But now they have gone, and I don't know where.
Now one photograph reigns alone;
Nothing dazzling, but all his own!
Shy and smiling and rather sweet—
Professional beauties, take a back seat!
The Captain has cast you all aside,
The Captain is full of love and pride
For someone whose features and form and name
Remain for ever unknown to fame.
And you suffer a final complete eclipse
Each night when the Captain kisses her lips.

T. O'Meara.

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For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

TAKING THE BISCUIT.

Two "Tommies" were sitting by the roadside "Somewhere in France," eating their bully-beef and biscuits. A little French girl came along, and stood watching them. With the usual generosity of our men, one of them gave the child a slice of beef and a biscuit, and she ran off with it to the village near by.

The Terrible Turk.

About twenty minutes later she returned and holding out the biscuit said: "Mother says I am to thank you very much for the meat and she's sent back the plate!"

WHAT ABOUT IT?

A Sergeant was drilling a squad of recruits. When he gave the order "About turn" all moved except one man, to whom the Sergeant went up and said "Didn't you hear me say 'about turn?'"

"Yes," said the dull one. "What about it?"

ANCIENT HISTORY.

C. O. (To old soldier brought up for having a dirty rifle): "Ah, a very old soldier. I suppose you made yourself out to be years younger than you are when you re-enlisted? Well, what were you charged with the last time you were brought up to the guard-room?"

OLD SOLDIER (Fed up): "'Aving a dirty bow and arrow, sir."

EXIT! THE PAINTER.

The tramp steamer having had her important repairs done, was having some small jobs attended to, so a stage was swung out over the ship's side, on which the painters were painting. A few new apprentices were seated round watching, and the Captain, who was going ashore, called to them to let go his boat's painter.

At that one of the lads ran to the stage and let go the ropes which supported it. After waiting a while the Captain ordered them again to let go the painter.

"He's gone, sir, pots and all," cried the raw hand.

And so he had!

THE M. O. WINS.

A certain private was very anxious to get 'out of the Army, and had on one or two occasions tried various excuses, but with no effect. However, at last he thought he had hit upon a "cert." He pretended he had gone deaf, and on his officer asking him various questions no sensible answer could be obtained.

In despair the officer sent him to the M. O., who, suspecting the "Tommy" was swinging the leg, just knocked his head and said: "I'm sure you can hear now."

"I can't, sir," replied the man, apparently not realising that he was convicted out of his own mouth.

The British Bulldog.

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THE JOTTINGS OF A SUBALTERN.

V.—THEODORA.

This month the dull lot of a pretty war-bride excites Cosmo's sympathy. In the following jotting he describes the way in which he brought romance and adventure into her life for one golden evening.

Till I met Theodora I never suspected myself of possessing a good heart. Perhaps I am wrong now; probably it was the innate chivalry of the stern, strong soldier for weak, delicate woman. I am a stern, strong soldier, you see. I am Cosmo Vernon Lacy, Second-Loot in the one and only Pinkshires, the dear old die-hard Poppyshirts.

I met Theodora first through a window. She was cleaning it, as a matter of fact. It was the window of one of those small modern houses that are the produce of a mediæval castle on the father's side and an artistic dog-kennel on the mother's. The Theodoras of this life settle down in them after marriage in places that are always called Something Park, and there is always one servant and a baby. Mr. Theodora goes up to town all day in peace-time, and the Theodoras all down the road call on one another and compare babies and have tea out of the wedding-presents and are a little dull. Now, of course, all the Mr. Theodoras are away fighting.

We used at that time to pass Theodora's house every day on our way to and from drill. I noticed her because she was cleaning her own windows and I thought it rather sporting of her. The first day she was doing the inside. The second day she was standing on the window-sill doing the outside of the dining-room window. Her hair was nearly black and very charmingly dressed; she had pretty feet and ankles, and I say this in all sincerity because her stockings were cashmere.

Theodora had a pretty, round little face with dark eyes, rather sad in their expression. I guessed she was thinking of Mr. Theodora, Somewhere in Somewhere. I also respected her because she took not the least notice of us, even when the men chanted their conviction that she was a great big beautiful doll. They *will* do these things.

Somehow I couldn't get Theodora out of my head. I'd been ragging about a good deal with one or two fluffy little things, and it may have been the backwash from this or it may not, but it seemed to me infinitely pathetic that Bobbie and Bertie or whoever they were should have posh frocks and theatre slippers to throw to the birds, while probably Theodora hadn't dined anywhere decent in town for a year. I determined to remedy this, come what would. But how to know Theodora? She was no target for the glad eye. I couldn't go up to her and say, "Didn't we meet at Brighton last summer?" It made me think, I can tell you, for Solomon himself couldn't understand the way of a

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man with a maid, and even I am an "also ran" beside him where women are concerned.

Finally I decided to appeal to her womanly nature. One fine morning I reeled in the saddle just before we got to Theodora's house on our way back from the afternoon's toil.

"I've come over beastly ill," I said to my sympathetic Sergeant. "I must have got giddy in that 'sections about' movement or something. What the blazes am I to do? I feel as if I should topple off my horse."

The Sergeant glanced about him hopelessly.

"What you want is a drop of brandy, sir," he said, "only there ain't a pub—beg pardon, sir, I means an inn—in sight, and, anyways, it's only quarter-to-four."

We were now abreast of Theodora's simple home.

"I think, Sergeant," I said, "I will ask the —ah!—the occupier of this house—Lyndhurst or whatever it is—to give me a glass of water. Orderly, hold my horse a minute."

I dropped artistically out of the saddle and staggered up to Lyndhurst's fourteenth-century portal. The maid, about sixteen, faintly dishevelled, with a smut on her nose, opened the door. I had surprised her as she was on the point of changing into her respectable black. It must have been washing-day or something.

"I beg your pardon," I said faintly, "but could you possibly let me have a glass of water? I feel rather ill."

"Oo!" said the little maid excitedly. "I'll tell missus!" The lower classes are so dramatic.

Theodora came out in her charming, pathetic, thirty-one-and-six Oxford Street afternoon frock. Her low white brow wrinkled in sympathy as I stammered out my piteous tale.

"You must let me give you a cup of tea," she said, full of sympathy. "I expect they work you awfully hard. I feel so sorry for soldiers; my husband's a soldier, though, of course, he isn't an officer. Susie, bring tea into the drawing-room."

I felt an absolute convict. She was so decent to me, and the way she said "my husband" cut me to the heart. I really believe she loved him, extraordinary as it sounds. But I hardened my heart because it was for Theodora's good. I went into the drawing-room, very new and like the drawing-room in someone's model £200 house, and sat carefully in a Jacobean armchair. Susie having hastily paraded in her black kit, brought in the tea set forth on many wedding presents, and Theodora ministered to me.

"I expect you miss your husband very much," I murmured, feeling almost shy. "No doubt he's having a fairly good time though. Intelligent men always get on in the Army. I'm sure he'll be a warrant officer in no time. They're fearful nuts, you know."

"I know he will," said Theodora, with a wife's simple and groundless faith. "He's most awfully conscientious. He takes the greatest pains over his buttons even on leave."

"Ah!" I assured her, "then his success is certain. Boots and buttons count no end in the Army. If he keeps his hair short as well——"

"He's had it cropped," she moaned, "and it had the loveliest kink in it."

"Then you may hear any day he's a Sergeant," I told her, and her eyes fairly sparkled.

Presently I rose to go. I thanked her prettily, said I felt much better,

Theodora confided in me that her husband was awfully conscientious, and took the greatest pains over his buttons, even on leave.

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I took along a little offering of a few rather decent chrysanthemums, which Theodora insisted on putting in water at once.

saluted nicely, and left. I know she peeped through the window curtains to watch me mount. The drug had begun to work. It counts for something in Acacia Road to entertain an officer in the Pinkshires.

In common decency I called on Theodora—Mrs. Somers, as perhaps I ought to call her—several days later, to thank her for her kindness. I took along a little offering of flowers—nothing elaborate, mind you, just a few rather decent chrysanthemums that Bobbie or Bertie wouldn't have looked at, because I knew Theodora. Three shillings-worth of what the florist called "Chrysants" would win ground where two pounds' worth of hot-house roses would merely terrify. And after Theodora had thanked me, and insisted on putting the flowers in water at once, I launched the long-prepared attack with a skill and precision which would have made Hindenburg sick with envy.

"Mrs. Somers," I began ardent'y, "you have been so very good to me that I'm going to ask you a little favour." I looked at her out of wide, youthful eyes, for one should always work the shy, almost timid, young man act on the young married woman. It makes her feel so mature and motherly, which is delicious in the early twenties.

"I want you to dine with me in Town one evening and go to a theatre. I can't ask my mother to ask you because she's down in Devonshire, but a very favourite aunt of mine would make a third, I know. Do say you'll come."

I leant back and watched her with a gaze as limpid as a cow's. I saw her emotions pass over her face in a procession—surprise, pleasure, doubt, indecision, longing.

"It's very, very nice of you," hedged Theodora. "Of course, it would be lovely, but—do you think your aunt would mind very much?"

I saw her mentally re-designing her evening gown. I became brisk and enterprising at once.

"Will Thursday suit you? I could get leave on Thursday. It will? Good! Then I'll wire to my aunt at once. Thanks so much, Mrs. Somers. Awfully good of you!"

And I picked up whip, gloves, cap, and left before she could say "No!"

Needless to remark, I have no favourite aunt, and if I had I wouldn't let her make a third anywhere for love or money.

I think I shall always remember Theodora's Thursday. Perhaps it will count unto me for righteousness and offset one or two more frivolous expeditions with less serious damsels. I picked up Theodora in a car at Lyndhurst and we swished in a distinguished manner along not unobservant Acacia Road. I feared for a second lest Theodora might suffer socially through joy-riding with me while her husband was away, but the thought didn't seem to trouble her a bit. Perhaps she had burnt her boats. Anyhow, she sat back as in a dream, and smiled inscrutably with one eyebrow raised slightly—a most fascinating mannerism.

We rolled up to Town in a beautiful first-class carriage, and I ministered respectfully to Theodora, arranging a travelling rug around her because of the cold. Then we slid through the dark in a taxi to the "Magnifique," where Aristide looked after us in his accustomed manner, and all the time Theodora said hardly a word.

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Perhaps Theodora's evening will offset one or two more frivolous expeditions with less serious damsels.

But when the waiter brought the wine-list and I looked interrogation at her, she clasped her hands almost passionately, and exclaimed:

"Red, please, it looks so much more wicked!"

So I commanded a not unkindly Burgundy. Then I was dumb, and waited for Theodora to go on. She began to astonish me.

"And take me somewhere wicked afterwards, please," she went on, with a little flame creeping up in her dark eyes. "I mean a wicked theatre or revue or something. Just for to-night; I'm sick of being good.

"Of course," went on Theodora, "I'm a type. Every woman hungers for romance and adventure, Mr. Lacy. They often think they will find both in marriage, so they marry. But the average husband isn't a romantic figure, so they get hungrier and hungrier."

I filled Theodora's glass and drained my own. I needed support.

"Of course, Jim is quite fond of me. Still it never occurred to him I can get dull as long as I've Lyndhurst and a baby. We aren't well enough off for more excitements than these.

"So may I be a little wicked, please, this once—once in my whole life?" pleaded Theodora, and I could have wept at the pathos in her voice. "That is if your aunt doesn't mind," she added, looking round politely at nothing.

"I'm afraid my aunt can't come," I explained, looking Theodora in the eye. "She never emerges from the last century."

"Good!" said Theodora.

We dined as kings and princes are supposed to, and we went to the brightest revue on the boards. Theodora's gown might have been less costly than others among the audience, but she led the field in youth and high spirits. I held her hand in the taxi, and she snuggled down in her corner drunk with happiness.

"Think of it!" she exclaimed. "This is my one slice of Romance. It's got to last me all my life. And many women don't get so much!"

"Then I think we might set its more usual seal on a delightful evening," I said gently.

She leant forward with her lips just parted, while, full of respectful admiration, I kissed Theodora.

I held her hand in the taxi, and she snuggled down into her corner drunk with happiness.

(A further jotting from Cosmo's notebook appears next month.)

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A WOMAN'S REASON.

By W. Heath Marriner.

"I have no other than a woman's reason,
I think him so because I think him so."

When the men joined her in the billiard room they found Mary Crofton with *The Times* in her hands and a very distressed expression in her deep-set dark eyes.

"Jim," she said, addressing her husband, "you never told me, and I scarcely glanced at the paper this morning! Reggie Dundas is killed!"

"Oh, yes!" replied Crofton, a fair, complacent man of middle-age. "I meant to tell you and forgot. The S——shires were terribly cut up last week! Well, Dundas has been out since the very beginning—charmed life the fellow seems to have had! Help yourselves to smokes, you two."

Philip Reece and Tony Nicholson were dining with the Croftons. Philip, a dark, stolid-looking major of about forty, had married Mary's sister a couple of years before, and Tony, who now and then glanced with furtive pride at his newly-acquired second star, was her brother. It was Philip who now spoke.

"I never knew Dundas." His expression added eloquently—"I'm glad to say!"

"I saw a good deal of him in town before the war. One of the lads of the village, and no mistake!" said Tony, with a smiling and half-apologetic glance at his sister.

Mary laid aside the paper. She was about thirty-three, and though her dress was chosen with exquisite taste, and her hair gracefully arranged, she was undeniably and irremediably plain.

Her big, good-natured husband gave rather a rueful sigh.

"Oh, well—*de mortuis*, you know!"

"I met him a great deal," said Mary in a musing voice. "It was the season before the war, Tony, as you say. He danced splendidly! He used to fly, too. I went up with him at Hendon once. You remember, Jim?"

She glanced at her husband, who smiled tolerantly.

"Yes! I put my foot down, didn't I, old girl?"

She turned to the others.

"Jim didn't like it at all. He said I was making myself conspicuous with a man who was—but you both know what he was!"

"An out-and-out bad egg!" declared Tony, with elegant conciseness.

Philip's upper lip, always long, grew longer still.

"I am glad to say that Annie always cut him!" he said. He was rather pompous in his manner.

Mary smiled slightly.

"Yes! Annie would! But I was quite discreet, wasn't I, Jim? I never flew with him again. And I wouldn't go with him in one of those beautiful racing cars he had. He asked me several times."

She looked again at her husband.

"My dear, you were sensible!" he replied, with a shrug of his shoulders. "You saw the sound sense of my objection to your going about so much with Dundas! People were beginning to cut him then." He turned to the other two. "It was after that disgraceful Haynes-Leggatt divorce case that he asked Mary to go up with him at Hendon."

"Ah!" Philip stiffened a little. "You were quite right, Jim!"

"Yes," said Mary, and there was a curious, abstracted look in her eyes, "Jim was quite right. I saw that at once."

There was a pause. Then Tony said, in his breezy, off-hand way:

"Men couldn't stand Dundas. One or two of the clubs were getting a bit hot for him. Lucky for him the old war blew along!"

"I'll not deny he was a good-looking fellow," owned Crofton, who prided himself on his sense of fair play.

"It wasn't his looks with me," said Mary in her meditative tones. "I liked him for something else."

"You *liked* him, old girl?" Tony's eyebrows climbed to the top of his forehead.

Crofton's gaze was a trifle disapproving. Hang it all, he was probably thinking, Mary shouldn't say such things! The man had been a cad! Brave, and all that, of course, and had died for his country! Still—to hear one's own wife say that she had liked him!

"My dear, you don't mean that! You were too sensible to be carried away by the cheap sort of attractiveness the fellow had!" He spoke with gentle reproof.

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"Well, he's dead now," she said gently, "and perhaps the Recording Angel pulled a very long face over his record. But . . . he gave a plain woman, who has spent bitter moments before her mirror, some of the happiest hours of her life." [Page 580, col. 2]

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"Annie loathed the man!" asserted Philip, looking askance at his sister-in-law. "Most decent women did!"

A certain strain had almost imperceptibly crept into their tones. Tony broke the tension.

"Hang it all, are we going to discuss the fellow all the evening?" he protested.

His sister rose with a little laugh.

"By no means! Let's play billiards. We'll take them on, shall we, Jim?"

They played for an hour or so. Then, sitting round the fire once more, the men fell to discussing the war. Philip had been in France forty-eight hours before, and the other men listened with eagerness to his incisively-expressed opinions on things "out there." His sister-in-law kept her eyes on the khaki sock she was knitting. She was unusually silent, and her husband once or twice looked at her inquiringly.

At length, when Philip's eloquence was abating, she folded up her work, and said:

"Well, I think I'll go to bed. I'm rather tired. But first of all, I'd like to tell you all why I liked Reggie Dundas."

There was a gleam of mingled amusement and defiance in her eyes.

The three regarded her with the horror and dismay of Englishmen who expect an emotional revelation.

"It was because he was the only man in the world who has ever treated me as though I were a pretty woman instead of a plain one," she said quietly.

Her husband stared, wide-eyed and open-mouthed. Philip's expression was severe, disgusted even. Tony fidgeted and frowned.

"It may seem a strange reason to men," she went on in calm, meditative tones, "but almost any woman would understand. It's not our business to judge each other, but I see that, according to the standards by which we *do* judge, he was a—a bad egg!" She smiled gently at her brother. "He was the only man in the world who ever made me forget that I am a plain woman!"

She spoke quite quietly. The men avoided looking at her or at each other.

"I know you think it odd of me to tell you this," she continued. "But it was odd that I, a decent woman"—she gave Philip a level look—"came to like such a man! It needs some explaining! He treated me as though I were beautiful. He said pretty things to me. Oh, I daresay I should have despised him for a liar, but I didn't! We women are like that! We love being told that we're beautiful, even when we know that we're plain! And he didn't do it because he cared for me! Oh, no! I wasn't the sort of woman he cared for! He was the same to every woman. It was his way.

"You"—her eyes travelled slowly from one face to another, and humour twinkled in their depths—"have never permitted me to indulge in the delusion that I was pleasant to look at! Sensible—kind—a good sort—a real pal—yes! But *pretty*, never. Reggie Dundas didn't assure me at every turn that I was 'sensible'!" Crofton's blonde face flushed slowly. "He didn't confide in me. Men so often confide in plain women, whom they compliment solemnly on their 'understanding'!

"He didn't patently avoid remarking upon other women's beauty in my presence, as some tactful people do!" Her glance rested momentarily upon the disturbed countenance of Tony. "He did none of these things. I'd been sensible, and understanding, and a good pal for so many years! It was a delightful change to be beautiful in a man's eyes for an hour or two. A fool's Paradise is sometimes better than no Paradise at all!"

She laughed, but there was a tremor in her voice.

She got up. Beautiful she would never be, but tenderness, humour, and courage looked out of her dim eyes.

"Well, he's dead now," she said gently, "and perhaps the Recording Angel pulled a very long face over his record. But I like to think"—her voice was very soft, her eyes smiled—"that when he found that he gave a plain woman, who has spent bitter moments before her mirror, some of the happiest hours of her life, he'd rub out some of the black items! I may be talking nonsense, but I like to think it! After all, who knows? But I'm a woman, and I'd have given anything to be beautiful, as most women would! So now you understand why I liked Reggie Dundas. Good-night, Philip!"

She held out her hand, which he took in silence. He still looked vaguely outraged.

"Give my love to Annie, won't you? Good-bye, Tony. This little revelation of feminine psychology will be useful when you fall in love!"

She bent to kiss her husband, and smiled very sweetly into his troubled, remorseful eyes.

Then Tony, still rather red in the face, opened the door for her, and she went out of the room.

They smoked in silence for two long minutes. Then Philip cleared his throat.

"As I was telling you, in Ypres . . ."

But it is certain that each one of them had been taught a lesson that he would never forget.

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The Last Card

By H. Mortimer Batten.

"And so through those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows."

I.

Last Card Gaspin, the gambler, dusted his patent-leather shoes with a silk handkerchief, then strolled to the door of the empty saloon to see what the row was about. The saloon was empty; not because the citizens of Pottsville were total abstainers, but because the hour was early—scarcely daybreak. Nor was the floor of the saloon exactly that of a temperance hall, being more remarkable for stray corks and cigar ends, torn cards and broken glass, than it was for such things as savour of simple and temperate living.

There was a row outside, and Gaspin, who had won his name by his tenacity at the tables, stepped into the sweet morning air to investigate. Scarcely had he closed the saloon door when it occurred to him that someone was up against it—and as likely as not that someone was himself. The fact that two men were stationed at the other side of the avenue watching the door perhaps assisted his alert judgment in coming to this decision, so Gaspin stood his ground calmly and awaited developments.

Then along the avenue came a dozen or more men, led by Calvin, a prominent citizen. Each of the men was heavily armed, and between them they hustled Pottsville Billy, who kept the saloon away down by the landing-stage. Billy was a whisky smuggler and a drunkard; his house was known as the lowest and filthiest den in its diseased quarter of the town.

Gaspin shrugged his shoulders. He had spent six months at this camp, and the men couldn't gamble for nuts. Now he guessed, from the look of things, that his time was up. The whole gambling fraternity of Pottsville owed him money, so Pottsville had put its heads together and decided to clear itself of its undesirables, and incidentally of debt.

"Right-about, Gaspin!" Calvin ordered. "You got to get out, so it's no use kicking. We've had enough of your sort."

Last Card Gaspin made no demur. He turned and walked coolly ahead of the throng, ready to fight any one or half-a-dozen of them, but not the whole city in a bunch. Seeing him, Billy ceased to struggle, and slipped his hand through the gambler's arm as a sign of brotherhood.

Gaspin shook him off disdainfully. "It will be time enough to help you along when I've got to," he stated coolly. They were to hit the long trail together as partners, but as friends—never!

They allowed Gaspin to obtain his pony and to saddle up, but they gave him no time to obtain provisions or to change into his bush gear. When he demurred, they informed him that "your sort can make out anywhere." Billy had no pony, and no one offered to lend him one. He must go out as he came—on foot. They marched the two to the outskirts of the city, and there solemnly warned them that they returned at the peril of their lives.

II.

Gaspin rode slowly about fifty yards ahead of his partner till the city was out of sight, then he drew rein and waited.

"Got any grub, Billy?" he asked, gazing along the prairie track.

"No; but I got this!" and from his pocket Billy drew a bottle of firewater.

The gambler quietly dismounted. He wrenched the bottle from Billy's grasp and smashed off the neck against the toe of his boot.

"Get up!" he ordered briefly.

"What in——!"

"Get up!" repeated Gaspin. He caught Billy by the neck and shook him. "The sooner you sober yourself and realise what we're up against the better," he pursued.

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"It's three days' ride to Golden City with a good pony and proper gear. We've no gear and only one pony between us. Get up!"

He got Billy mounted, and for three solid hours the gambler trotted over the hot sand in his thin patent-leather shoes. The trail led over the prairie foothills for half a day's ride; then it mounted suddenly towards the hills, and wound its course over the heights to Golden City, in among the hills. It was a dangerous trail at any time, and difficult to find. In winter it was impossible.

Evening found both men played out on the first slope of the foothills. There was a creek here and a reasonably sheltered camping-place. Far in the distance the smoke of Pottsville rose straight skywards, and Billy, tightening his belt, stood and cursed it. He cursed it with an easy flow of blasphemies which might have fired the very grass at his feet; then he turned and cursed the gambler.

Pottsville Billy had not forgotten that, only a few weeks ago, Gaspin, then popular, had entered his saloon with Calvin and one or two other prominent citizens. They had fired up the whole show, leaving a wreckage of broken demijohns and splintered benches behind them. They had done this because the house was drawing pretty near the limit, and because Pottsville Billy was a "mean swipe anyway," and Billy had not forgotten the second insult of that very morning; and lastly, though perhaps most significant in his memory, was the smashing of the precious bottle of which he stood in such sore need. And so Billy cursed Pottsville, cursed the gambler, and finally cursed the whole landscape from skyline to skyline.

Gaspin's thoughts were different, but perhaps no less bitter. There was the journey ahead of them. It was, of course, a gamble whether or not they got through, and it never occurred to Gaspin that the unmistakable shadow of doubt was cast by the unkempt person of Pottsville Billy. He merely regarded the drunkard in the same light as he regarded the waterless sand tracks, the glaring autumn sun, and the other inevitable elements of discomfort that surrounded him.

Then there were the men at Pottsville. Pottsville, the gambler felt, had played it very low down on him. It was no fault of his that the boys couldn't gamble for nuts; if, occasionally, they had allowed themselves to be cheated, that was their show. It was owing to their own stupidity that their wealth filtered into his spacious pockets, till, realising the inconvenience of paying debts, they had turned him out and forbidden him to return.

"Well," thought Gaspin, "I reckon I know who had most to do with it—the men who owed me most! Sooner or later we'll meet again, man to man, not forty against one. Dollars ain't going to square the deal then."

The two men slept apart. Gaspin was wakened by a dull roar and by the blast of flying sand in his face. It was blowing half a hurricane, and the hollow in which he lay was filled with a dull, fitful glow.

No need for the gambler to ponder as to what was astir. He knew the sound and sight and smell of it. The prairie was on fire!

Gaspin grinned. The wind was blowing from him to Pottsville, and that city would already have wakened to the fact that the long-dreaded prairie fires were on the move. It would cost many of them their horses, some their homes, and a few, no doubt, their lives.

Suddenly Gaspin leapt up, wide awake. They would blame *him* for this—the men of Pottsville! The fire had started from his trail; they would say he started it! His life was not worth much to them; they would hold it as cheaply as he himself held it, and string him up at the edge of the timber belt without even a trial. Many of them, indeed, would be relieved to see him finally out of action.

Gaspin went to the place where he had seen Billy sleeping. The man was gone! He strolled to the tethering post where they had left the pony. There was no pony there! Then the gambler returned to the ridge, and lay, his chin on his hands, watching the holocaust, now beyond all human control.

"Let them blaze!" he muttered hoarsely, but Pottsville Billy—well, Billy had stolen the pony and fired the prairie! At that moment he was riding post-haste for Golden City, there to describe how Gaspin had, deliberately and maliciously, fired the grass in the hope of destroying Pottsville! Thus Billy would reinstate himself, and incidentally pay off a few old scores.

III.

Next morning Gaspin shrugged his shoulders. It was a gamble. He would make the best of his way towards Golden City, and probably the lynching party would meet him *en route*.

That evening found him on the long, narrow ascent, where the foothills trail became the pack trail—the mountain track. He thanked his stars to be among the timber again. Here was a wide plateau, the mountain side falling away in a series of steps from the side of it. The breast rose three thousand feet, almost

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He got Billy mounted, and for three solid hours the gambler trotted over the hot sand in his thin patent-leather shoes.

sheer, the trail hugging the cliffs, as though to hide itself from the fierce upland gale.

The wind had turned icy cold. It cut straight through the gambler's city clothing as though he were unprotected; but for quite another reason Gaspin disliked that wind.

He was out of sight where he lay, though he could watch the trail, and he was just pondering whether to risk a fire when the clatter of ponies' hoofs came up wind from the Pottsville direction. Next moment Gaspin broke into uncontrollable mirth as the train came in view.

It was led by a young man who possessed an enormous nose. Gaspin recognised him as the Bishop, an occasional—very occasional—visitor to Pottsville. Behind the young man rode two old people—a plump old lady who, seated in a kind of arm-chair saddle, smiled placidly on the landscape, and a very thin, keen-eyed old gentleman, well-groomed, but quite as unsuitably attired for his surroundings as was his spouse. Finally came two very sleepy old mules, laden sky-high with a wonderful assortment of packs, most unskilfully arranged. The whole outfit looked so much like a picnic affair that Gaspin, weak with hunger, perceived no peril in hailing them.

"Hi—there—Bishop!" he shouted, and next moment the Bishop was stumbling towards him, a frank smile of greeting on his boyish countenance.

"Gaspin!" he cried. "My stars, Gaspin! Who ever expected to see you here? But what"—he paused and looked the gambler up and down—"what in thunder are you doing here in city togs and alone?"

The gambler's incredible story filled the young man with admiration. Gaspin had

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experienced a spell of assorted luck—very assorted! His claims had not panned out as he hoped, and he had lost heavily at cards; so he had just cleared out without a cent to try his luck elsewhere. No grub, no pony, no nothing! "Say, Bishop, who're the two old folk you've got along with you?"

"Hush!" whispered the boy, holding up a warning finger. "Father and Mother! Not a word to them about that little flutter I had along with you and Calvin and Billy Templeton. It would shock them horribly!"

Gaspin did some quick thinking, then he remembered that he had played one night with this boy, and—thank Heavens!—the boy had won. At the end of the game Gaspin had led him aside. "Don't think you're going to win again, my son," he whispered, "'cause you're not! Chuck it right now. It's a fool's game."

"Say, Gaspin," whispered the boy as they drew near the old people, "I took your advice. I've never touched a card since. Thanks!"

Then suddenly it dawned upon Gaspin that he had at last struck something in the way of unscratched soil. He felt the discovery quite refreshing. The Bishop had a ranch somewhere out Lame Dog way, and knew nothing about him. Well, they would find out sooner or later—probably with the devil of a thump! In the meantime—nothing said.

Gaspin was officially presented to the old people. "This is Mr. Gaspin, of Pottsville," the Bishop announced. "Mr. Gaspin has experienced a run of bad luck—like I did, at first, you know, Father—and rather than borrow from his friends he hit the trail on foot and without grub. What d'you think of that, Mother?"

The old lady bowed graciously and smiled approvingly, but made no comment—probably because she was rather deaf. The old gentleman descended from his tame old pony, shook hands, and then called:

"Mary! Hi, Mother!"

His wife beamed on him. "Mary," he repeated, "he's hungry! Wants food! Eh—eh!" and he pointed to his own open mouth.

The old lady slipped from her saddle with an alacrity that was really surprising. "I am sure you must be *very* hungry!" she told Gaspin, with the same smile of approval, as she began to bustle round and prepare a homely meal.

"Tired out, I'm sure," she told the Bishop. "Bring that potted chicken and the eggs."

As a rule, Gaspin merely tolerated women. For many years he had known none but those that drift to the outside edge. His knowledge of these had not endowed him with any special respect for womanhood, yet to night Last Card Gaspin, the stoic, caught his breath as though suddenly affected with some lung trouble.

What a meal! Not that there was a huge spread, but it was served in a way that made a fellow hungry, and a white and kindly old hand anticipated his requirements. There were rings on that hand—quaint, old-fashioned rings, not particularly beautiful, but at any rate quiet and tasteful. And when the meal was over the old man pointed towards the great wooden cross at the end of the plateau, standing out grim and bleak against the fading sunset.

"What's that?" he said. "Teddy couldn't tell us."

"Yes," said the old lady, hearing at last. "What is it? We've been able to see it for miles."

Teddy sipped his coffee.

"That," said Mr. Gaspin, "marks the burial place of a party of Indians who were snowed in on this trail, just above there, on——" he paused. He had forgotten the date. "Ten years ago," he added with a sudden thoughtfulness.

"Dear—dear!" said the old gentleman. "And you were here then?"

"At Golden City, sir. Winter began phenomenally early that year. It caught the Indians unawares. When at last we got to them there was only one—an old squaw—living. We raised the cross in memory of the rest—poor devils!"

"Poor things!" said the old lady. "What they must have suffered!"

A few minutes later, when Gaspin was lending the Bishop a hand with the ponies, he said suddenly:

"Say, Bishop, what date is it?"

"September twenty-seventh," the Bishop answered. "Why?"

"Oh!" said Gaspin. That was all.

It was September the twenty-eighth, ten years ago, that the Indians were snowed in! And that memorable storm began with a howling nor'-wester and prairie fires!

IV.

Gaspin awoke at midnight, chilled through, in spite of the abundant supply of blankets the old lady had forced upon him. She regarded him as a sick man, and accordingly had taken him under her wing. It was unlike Gaspin to feel the cold when well fed, so without rising he reached his hand under the apron of the tent he and the Bishop occupied. He withdrew it with a start and leapt up. Last night prairie fires, to-night—snow! The

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One night the two old people fell on their knees with their faces towards the storm . . . and the two young men stood behind them with heads bowed. [*Page 586, col. 1.*]

whole mountain side was white with snow, and a blinding fury swept down the gulch!

Gaspin wakened the Bishop.

"Never mind," said the boy sleepily. "It will all be melted to-morrow." Then he settled down again.

The gambler got up. He obtained the axe, and near to the tent where the two old people slept he erected a barricade of brushwood against which the snow might drift, thus covering the tent without crushing it. It was a terrible night, and, his difficult task completed, Gaspin fought his way to the ponies, obtained their packs, and hauled them into the tent. This done, he fell back into his blankets exhausted and dazed by the storm, and as he slept a single horseman on the plains below strove to find the trail from which he had strayed, and, failing, wandered into the blinding eternity of the foothills, and thus out of a world of sin and shame.

There was no breaking camp next day. The Bishop played his mouth-organ and sang old-time songs. The old lady told tales of her own childhood, and the old man tied knots in a piece of string, and unravelled them with most extraordinary dexterity. Towards midday they managed to gain the ponies, and did what they could for the comfort of the poor animals. As they returned, the old man took Gaspin by the arm and questioned him as to the possible seriousness of the situation.

"When will the storm abate?" he asked anxiously.

Gaspin bit his lips and surveyed the sky. The great timber cross at the end of the plateau met his gaze. September the twenty-eighth!

"Maybe to-morrow," he said; "maybe the next day. What made you hit the trail this time of year?"

The old man explained. He and Mary had come all the way from England to see the boy. The fires had upset their plans, and, as Teddy's ranch was burnt out, they had all decided to go to Golden City, and thence south for the winter.

That night Gaspin and the Bishop went through the stores. They found they possessed enough for five days' ordinary rations. The Bishop was still jovially convinced that the snow would clear, and that to-morrow they'd all go on together; but when, next morning, he awoke and saw the drifts piled high across the plateau, a new thoughtfulness settled upon him.

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They could not visit the ponies that day. They sang songs and told yarns, and Gaspin, feeling that he had stood too long a listener and given no contribution, took from his pocket a pack of cards and showed the old people many wonderful and surprising tricks. They finished up the day in comparative excitement with a game of "Spot the Lady."

The next day was different, and each day that followed told its story. Gaspin forsook his cards, and took to singing hymns with the rest. Then one night the two old people fell on their knees with their faces towards the storm. There was something in their bowed figures which brought a gasp from the throat of the gambler, and the two young men stood behind them with heads bowed. At the end of the plateau the solemn wooden cross stood up against the storm.

Each day wrought its change. The Bishop became more restless, yet more thoughtful. His boyhood seemed to have slipped from him; his nose developed into a veritable beak. The old man changed least of all. He did not seem to comprehend the future. All he wanted was to hold his Mary's hand. She was a shade whiter, but in her faded old eyes was a look of trustful hope. She turned very deaf. They could not make her hear, but still she smiled and nodded. The gambler was changed most of all; the others could see it, could feel it in his presence. He was drawing near the Great Divide—Gaspin was sinking!

That night the two young men knelt behind the two old people. They knelt in the snow, outside the tent facing the blast—God's merciless skies above. The old lady murmured something in her soft voice. They could not hear what she was saying, but it did not matter. And when they rose, the gambler caught the woman's hand and held it to his lips.

"Pray for me, Mother!" he whispered. "Pray for me!" And those were the last words he ever spoke to her.

Alone in the tent with the Bishop a few minutes later, Gaspin drew something from under his blankets. It was a pair of snow-shoes, rudely fashioned from green cedar and a few strips of leather. He handed them to the boy. "Get out to-morrow," he said. "If you can land back within four days you will be in time."

The boy nodded. "They can't last four days," he said hoarsely. "There isn't the grub——" And the boy hid his face.

Last Card Gaspin drew a second bundle from under his pillow. "Take this to their tent when you go," he said. "It will help them through."

The boy opened the bundle. Gaspin's rations for some days past were within.

"You've starved yourself?" suggested the Bishop.

Gaspin nodded. "Perhaps so," he said. "If you knew the truth you'd understand why I can't take your grub."

When the boy awoke next morning he was alone in the tent. Gaspin was gone! He had played his last card. Overhead the sun was shining across the mountainous drifts, and the boy told the old people what was in his mind. He left them as he had seen them first from his infant eyes—hand in hand.

When the search party came, they found the two old people still side by side, just as the boy had left them—trusting to each other and to the boy. At the foot of the great cross they found Gaspin, the gambler, and as they brushed the white crystals from his hands, something bright glistened in the sunlight between his stark fingers. It was a little gold locket, the initials on which, alas! were not his own, and inside the locket was a coloured miniature of an old, white-haired lady.

"It's his mother!" explained the Bishop. "It's Gaspin's mother!"

EYES RIGHT!

Her eyes were shining, big and black,
I can recall them still;
I said "Good-bye," and then turned back—
As lovers often will—

To print upon my memory
Once more those shining eyes,
Because she said: "Please buy for me
Some hooks about that size!"

Leslie M. Oyler.

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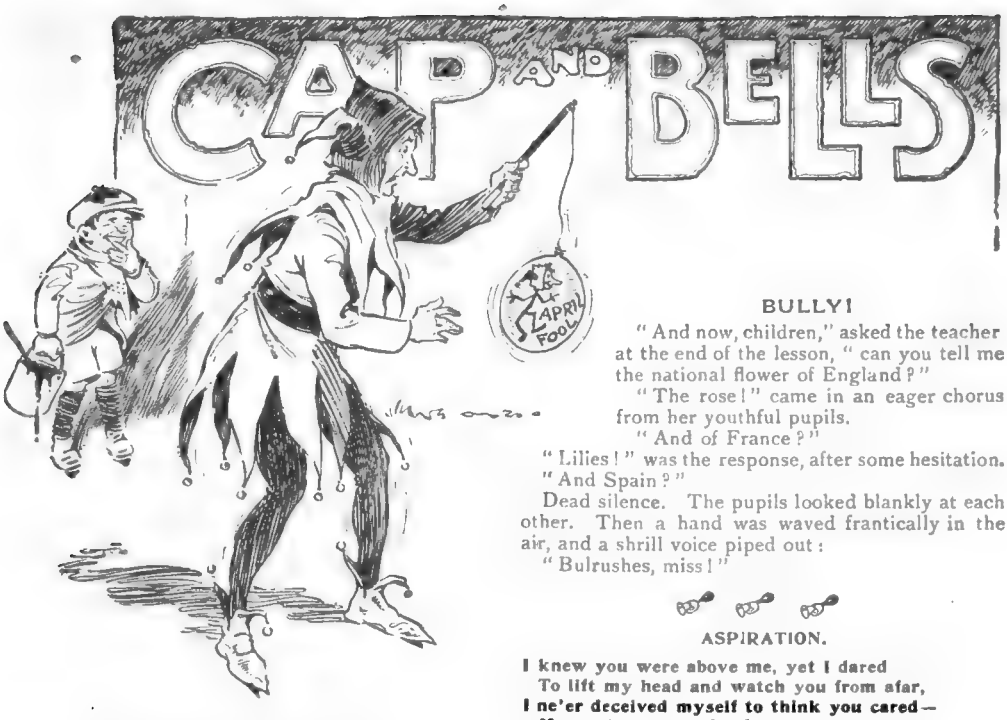


ANOTHER SUCCESS.

His father was at the station when he stepped from the train, but instead of being greeted warmly he had to submit to a series of rather awkward questions.

"Why, Thomas, what brings you home? It isn't holiday time yet."

"No," replied Thomas, looking round for his trunk.

"Well, I thought you were not coming home again until the end of the term?"

"Changed my mind," was the laconic response.

"When are you going back?"

"I'm not going back. Don't like it there."

"I am surprised. I always thought it was a very good school. In fact the masters have turned out some of the smartest men in the country."

"Yes, I know that—they turned me out!"

PRESERVED AND PRESERVER.

AVIATOR (to workman who has rescued him from the sea): "Ah, my preserver, my good preserver!"

WORKMAN (dejectedly): "Stow it, guv'nor. Don't chaff a fellow just because he works in a jam factory."

A CHOICE OF EVILS.

PASSENGER: "What makes the train run so slowly?"

IRATE CONDUCTOR: "If you don't like it you can get off and walk."

PASSENGER: "I would, only I am not expected until train-time."

BULLY!

"And now, children," asked the teacher at the end of the lesson, "can you tell me the national flower of England?"

"The rose!" came in an eager chorus from her youthful pupils.

"And of France?"

"Lilies!" was the response, after some hesitation.

"And Spain?"

Dead silence. The pupils looked blankly at each other. Then a hand was waved frantically in the air, and a shrill voice piped out:

"Bulrushes, miss!"

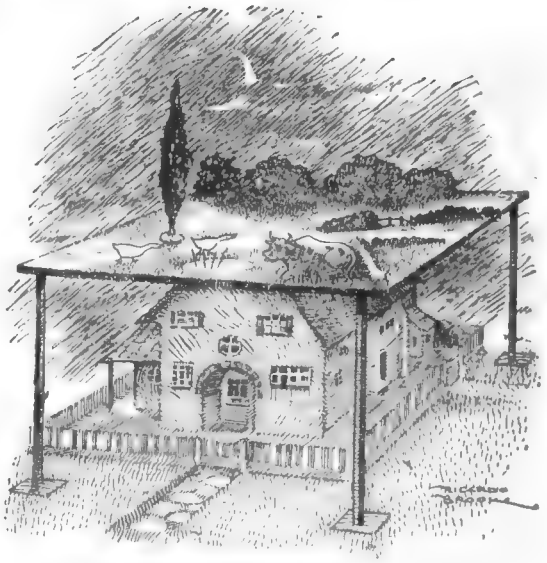
ASPIRATION.

I knew you were above me, yet I dared
To lift my head and watch you from afar,
I ne'er deceived myself to think you cared—
May not a worm give homage to a star?

And when you came my world was filled with light,
I felt uplifted; did you never know?
You raised me to a sudden dizzy height—
Then plunged me to the deepest depths below,

Yet do not think I feel you are to blame
That in my lute I find this grievous rift;
I know you treated other men the same
Because for many weeks you worked the lift!

Kathleen Kent.



FAMOUS INVENTIONS OF THE WAR.

The Zeppelin Deluder.

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HOTEL MANAGER (asked to cash a cheque for £10, after making a charge of £2 2s. for one night's accommodation): "H'm! I don't like to cash cheques for strangers. How much change have you about you?"

OFFICER: "Not more than twelve shillings."

HOTEL MANAGER: "Well, give me that, and call it square. Can't afford to risk losing anything nowadays."

THE NAMESAKE.

"Waiter," called the irascible customer, "do you call this an oyster stew?"

"Yes, sir," replied the sorely tried servant.

"Why, the oyster in this stew isn't big enough to flavour it."

"Oh, sir, he wasn't put in there for flavourin' purposes, sir; he's just put in ter christen it."

ONE OF A RENOWNED FAMILY.

Two gentlemen were once travelling together in a railway carriage. One was a stranger in that part of the country; the other appeared to be well acquainted with the district.

"You appear to know the country pretty well, sir?" remarked the stranger.

"Yes, I do," replied the other; "my name is a household word throughout this district."

The stranger became curious at once.

"You're mayor of a large town, perhaps?"

"No."

"Member of Parliament?"

"No."

"A director of this railway, perhaps?"

"No."

"Well," said the stranger impatiently, "who in creation are you, then?"

"I'm John Smith," was the calm reply.

ALSO PRESENT.

LITTLE GIRL: "Did the newspaper reporters notice your papa was at the great banquet last night?"

LITTLE BOY: "Yes."

"Mamma said she couldn't find your papa's name in the list."

"No, but the list ends up with 'and others.' That means papa. They always mention him that way."

THE LAY OF THE FAST SPINSTER.

Passing graveward sad and slowly
As a sermon to its close,
Shod with cashmere ribbed and holey
Where I once wore silken hose,
'Spite of clothes no tramp would fancy,
Purchased at a barbarous price,
I recall when Patrick Clancy
Used to stand me strawberry ice.

Handsome, hale, Hibernian Patrick,
Best of all my amorous batch!
Once I saw him do the hat trick
At a village cricket match.
Bond Street knew no well-dressed sinner
More sublime than him, the dog!
He would take me in to dinner
Like a millionaire *incog.*

Thickly as a *feu-de-barrage*
Fell his cheques they never cashed,
And he filled a spacious garage
With the motor-cars he smashed.
When the tradesmen whom he did—oh,
What a concourse!—howled for pelf,
He espoused a wealthy widow;
That is why I'm on the shelf.

François.

VICAR (with bad memory for dates): "Let me see, this is the eighteenth, isn't it?"

FOND MOTHER: "Oh, no, sir. Only the second."

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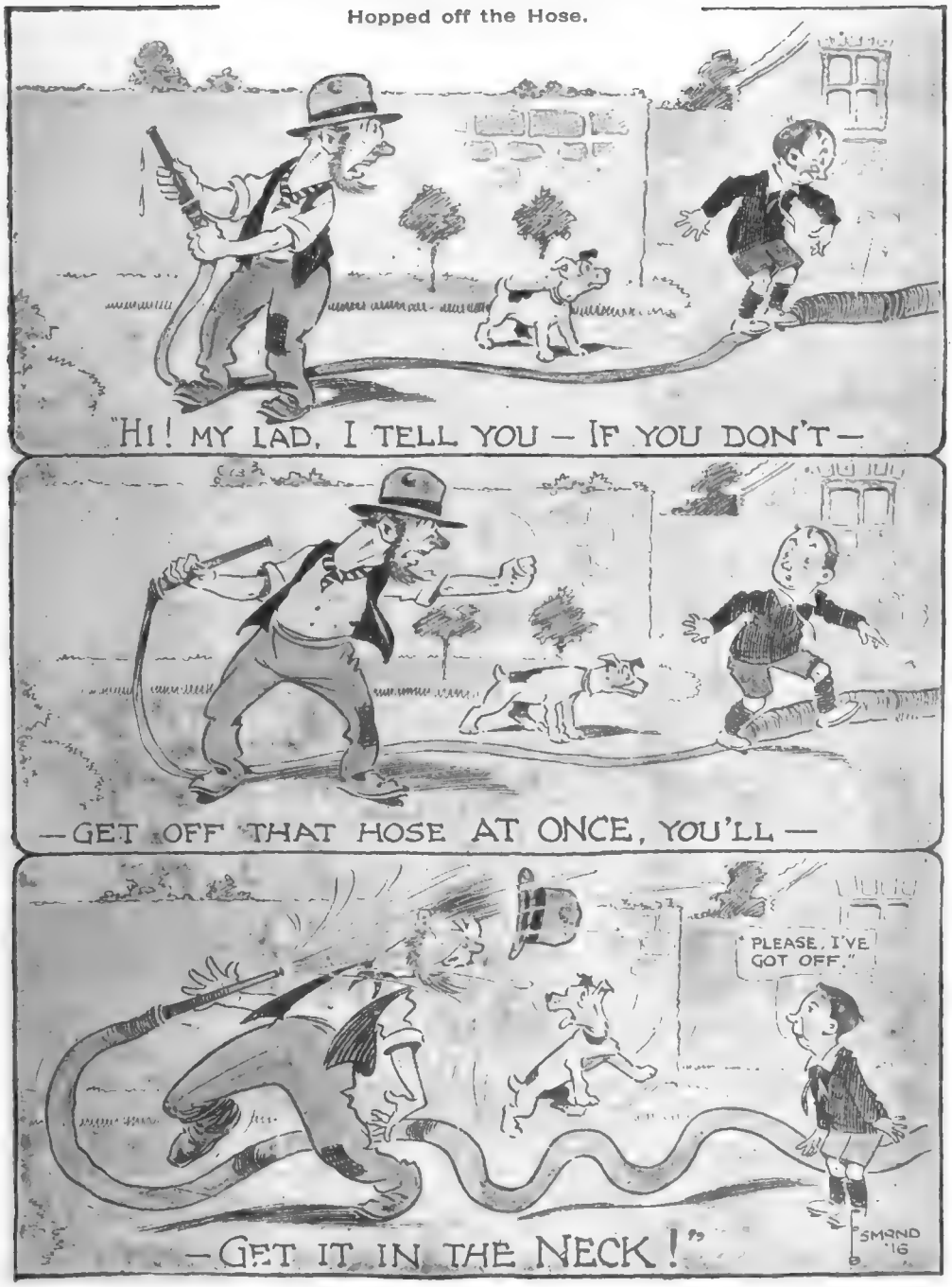
: GETTING IT IN THE NECK :

What Happened when Little Horace
Hopped off the Hose.



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HE KNEW IT.

"Oh, Mr. Jones," gushed the recently-promoted chorus-lady, as the sorely-tried stage-manager finally lost his temper. "I am trying!"

"You are!" roared the stage-manager—"very!"

CONSIDERATION REQUIRED.

GOLFER (who rather fancies himself): "I suppose you've been round the links with worse players than me, eh?"

The caddy takes no notice.

GOLFER (in his loudest voice): "I say, I suppose you've been round the links with worse players than me, eh?"

CADDY: "I heard verra weel what ye said the first time. I'm just thinkin' aboot it."

CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT.

In a certain town there once lived a couple of young fellows who had gone into partnership in a barber's business, and in order to pass the time one particularly dull afternoon, Tom proposed to Dick that they should indulge in a quiet game at "Nap." The game went on hour after hour, and when the shades of night had fallen for some time neither of them noticed that a customer had entered. He surveyed them in silent contempt for a few minutes.

"Sorry if I interrupt," he said acidly at last; "but I'm in a hurry. Which of you fervid sportsmen is going to shave me?"

Tom looked over the hand which had just been dealt him. Then, in a voice full of suppressed excitement, he said: "Just one moment, sir! Wait until we see who owns the shop!"

MISTRESS: "Martha, I was almost sure that while the policeman was in the kitchen last night I heard a sound like two people kissing."
MARTHA: "Did you hear it only once, mum?"
MISTRESS: "Yes."
MARTHA: "Then it wasn't us, mum."

NOBODY OF CONSEQUENCE.

After the second waltz they never parted. Right through the dance of the Village Pump Society they clung together, alternately dancing and sitting out the merry numbers.

He was in the seventh heaven of delight with his new-found friend, and she was no whit less pleased. The one fly in the ointment was a mysterious stranger who followed the couple wherever they went.

At last Ebenezer could stand it no longer. He turned upon Evangeline an inquiring look.

"Who is he?" he whispered hoarsely. "And why does he follow us about so?"

The lady was perfectly calm and collected.

"That fellow?" she ejaculated. "Oh, he's the man who bought me my ticket of admission!"

PURE FICTION.

"I say, is this here the novel you advised me to read?" said the cabman to the librarian.

"Yes," replied the librarian, "that's the one."

"Well," said the cabman, "you can just take it back. There's nine people in the first four chapters who hired cabs, and each one of 'em when he got out flung his purse to the driver. Now, when I want that sort of literature I'll go to Jools Vernes and get it pure."

KAMERAD!

WAITER: "Oh, yes, sir, the fish is quite fresh! It was caught this morning."

SOLDIER: "Go on! That was never caught—it gave itself up!"

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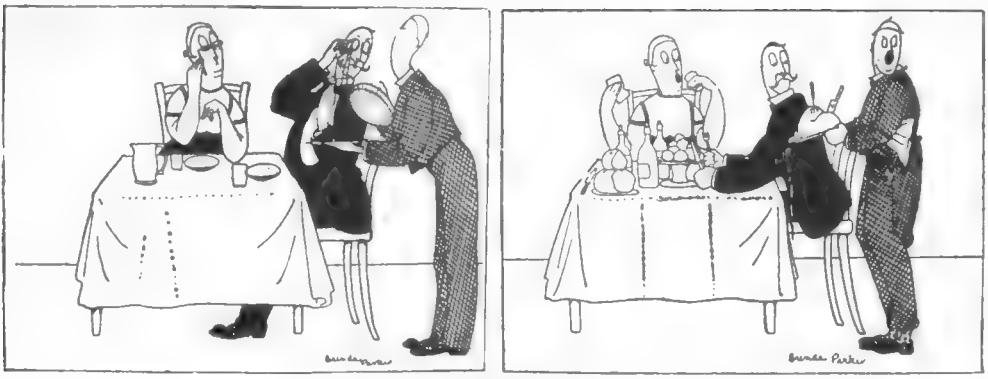

A WAR PROBLEM.

Should the Durham-Smiths still be select, though hungry, and dine at a smart restaurant on a split pea on toast and a glass of barley-water, for 4s. 6d.——

——or, for the same price, dine to repletion at some unknown and plebeian place where there is food in plenty?

THE EASIER WAY.

It was a bitterly cold night, and the Sergeant in charge of the police-station was congratulating himself that he no longer had to patrol a beat.

His thoughts were disturbed by the entrance of Police-Constable Pooke, recently from the country.

"What are you doing off your beat?" demanded the Sergeant.

"Come to report a 'orse dropped dead in Nebuchadnezzar Street," grunted the frozen Pooke.

"Well, sit down and make out your report at once, and don't waste any time about it!" retorted the Sergeant, who was something of a disciplinarian.

Down sat Pooke and wrote, with much difficulty, for some minutes.

"Sergeant," he said, looking up. "How do you spell Nebuchadnezzar?"

"If you don't know, I ain't going to tell you!" once more grunted the officer.

Pooke pondered the matter for some time, then, rising wearily, prepared to leave the station.

"Where are you going?" asked his superior. "You've not made out the report yet."

"Goin' to lug the 'orse into the 'Igh Street!" answered Pooke.

TO SUIT ALL TASTES.

"Halt!" yelled the officer.

The recruit went on.

"Did you ever drive a donkey, No. 7?" asked the officer.

"Once, sir," was the reply.

"And what did you say when you wanted him to stop?"

"Whoa, sir."

"Squad, quick march. Halt! No. 7, whoa," rasped out the irate officer.

A HIGH TEA.

A HOWLING SUCCESS.

Last winter a gentleman was advertised to sing at a charity concert presided over by a local city councillor—a self-made man. The first song was "The Owl" (Stephen Adams). On rising to announce it, the chairman was interrupted and informed that the singer had not arrived, a fact of which he duly notified the audience.

A little later, however, the missing baritone made his appearance, and was observed by the worthy chairman, who called him without delay. But the singer had hurried, and had not recovered his breath, so, with apologies, another artist was requisitioned.

At length the baritone was ready. Mr. Councillor rose with evident pleasure, and innocently discomfited the long-awaited singer by announcing with marked confidence:

"Mr. 'Ampton will now favour us with the longed-for 'Howl.'"

A WAR-TIME WOOING.

They were shortly to be married, and now they were sitting in his study, meditating on the blissful future.

"Algy," said the young lady suddenly, "every morn you send me violets which at even you have culled, don't you?"

"I do," responded the ever-faithful; "let the cost be what it may."

"You darling!"

A long pause for osculatory operations.

"But I should like to suggest," murmured the sweet young thing, "that some mornings you might send up a few mutton chops, or a couple of loaves. It wouldn't cost you half so much, but it would make a splendid hit with the old folks in these expensive times."

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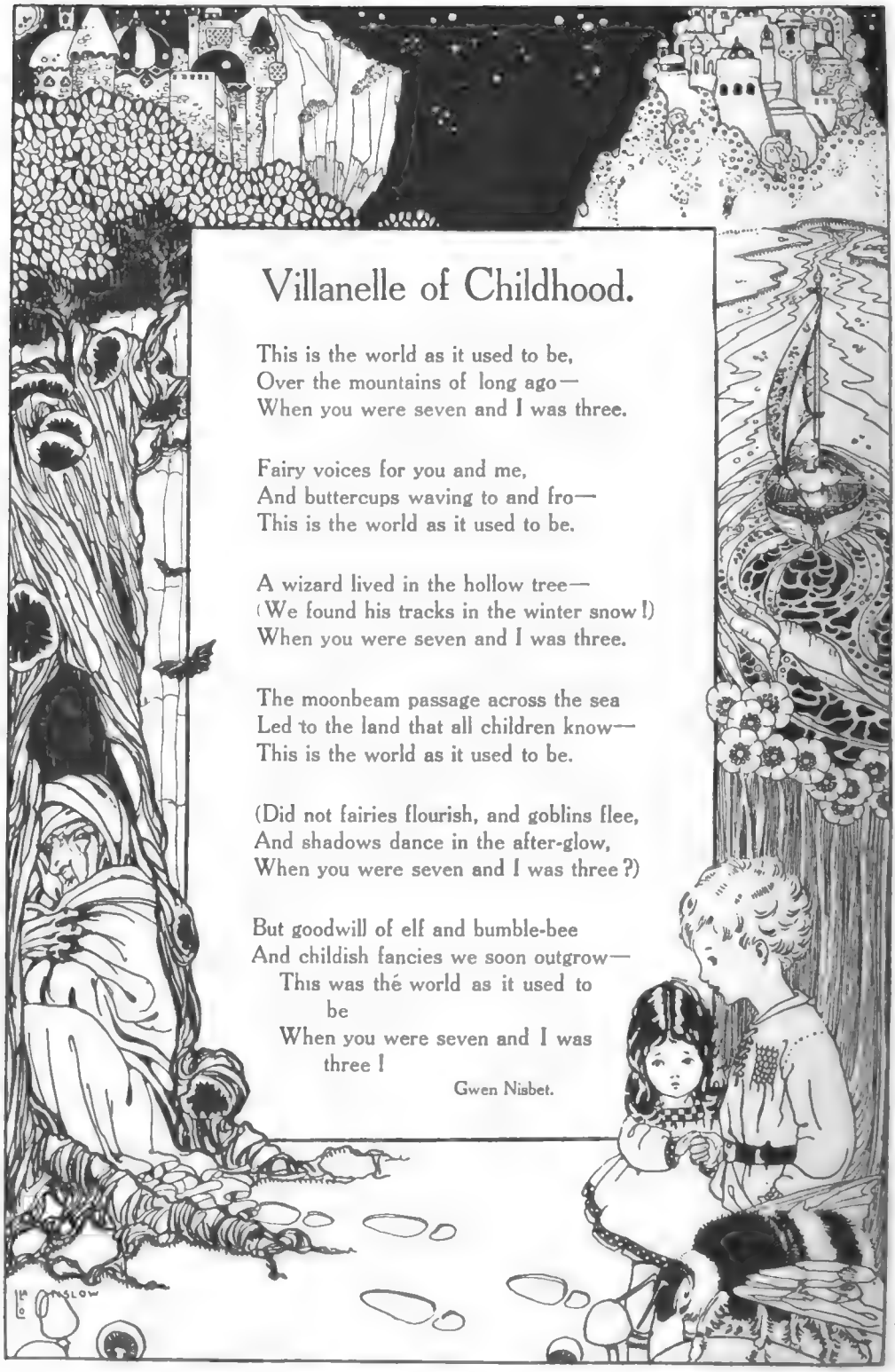

Villanelle of Childhood.

This is the world as it used to be,
Over the mountains of long ago—
When you were seven and I was three.

Fairy voices for you and me,
And buttercups waving to and fro—
This is the world as it used to be.

A wizard lived in the hollow tree—
(We found his tracks in the winter snow!)
When you were seven and I was three.

The moonbeam passage across the sea
Led to the land that all children know—
This is the world as it used to be.

(Did not fairies flourish, and goblins flee,
And shadows dance in the after-glow,
When you were seven and I was three?)

But goodwill of elf and bumble-bee
And childish fancies we soon outgrow—
This was the world as it used to be
When you were seven and I was three!

Gwen Nisbet.

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THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT.

By Mrs. Stanley Wrench.

"We'll cry both arts and learning down,
And hey! then up go we!"

Driven to define what she meant by "the artistic temperament," little Mrs. Stubbs looked worried.

"I'm sure I can't tell you," she confessed, "unless it means wearing floppy sort of gowns that remind you of your great-grandmother's bed curtains, and doing her hair up with combs instead of sensible hairpins. But if Jennifer says she's got an artistic temperament you may be sure she's got it right enough. Jennifer knows what she's talking about."

Her visitor looked puzzled.

"I hope it isn't catching," she remarked, and Mrs. Stubbs bridled all over.

"It isn't a complaint," she hastened to explain. "It's—it's——" but there she paused. "I don't really know what it is," she added, "but ever since Jennifer came back from those Reillys she's been as different as possible. She began with her bedroom—took down all the pictures, wouldn't have hangings on her bed, and wanted the room re-papered—and it was only last Easter her father and I had that nice rosebud paper put up, thinking it would please her and last till she got married. But there—talk about paper! If you were to see that room now! Dingy isn't the word! It gives me the shivers every time I go in it. Black carpet——"

"What?" almost shrieked Mrs. Goodchild. "A black carpet! I'm sure I never heard of a black carpet."

"No more did I till it came home," sighed her hostess. "Jennifer coaxed that out of her father; leastways, she got the money from him, though what he said when he saw it isn't for me to repeat.

"But that isn't all," she continued, plainly enjoying the effect she was having on Mrs. Goodchild. "She's actually had the walls covered with brown paper, just common brown paper, if you please, and she's got the weirdest sort of drawings pinned about—silly, topsy-turvy sort of things like coloured puzzles. They're not pictures, though Jennifer did tell me a famous artist friend of the Reillys had done them for her. All lines and scriggles they seem to me. Hush! here comes Jennifer," and as she spoke, a slim young girl, wearing a high-waisted muslin frock tied round with a broad sash, entered the room.

Mrs. Goodchild greeted her with the kindly familiarity of one who has known her since she was in crawlers, but she looked at Jennifer with a puzzled expression as the girl poured herself out some tea and refused buttered scones or toasted tea-cake.

"There!" she exclaimed. "I've got it. I was puzzling to know who you reminded me of, Jennifer. How funny! Why, you look for all the world like the picture of my grandmother which was done when she was seventeen."

"Really!" remarked Jennifer, in so strangely quiet a voice that both women stared at her in surprise. "One does see these resemblances sometimes."

An air of constraint seemed to hang over the room. The garrulous chatter of the two elder ladies seemed out of place with this old-world little figure demurely drinking her tea, and Mrs. Stubbs looked at her daughter half-apprehensively.

"What are you reading now, my dear?" she asked, as Jennifer rose to go, taking her book with her. "Jennifer is a great reader," she explained. "She reads whole sets of authors."

Jennifer held up her volume. It was "Pride and Prejudice." Her mother gave a sigh of relief.

"So that's it," she remarked when Jennifer had gone. "Jane Austen now. It was Elinor Glyn last week. She wore a red rose in her hair and great yellow beads, and her father made her so cross. He said she looked as though she was training for the

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pictures, and he kept asking her if she was hungry. Told her she looked as though she could smell steak and onions and wasn't going to have any."

"Well, I must be going," said her visitor. "I don't understand even now why Jennifer wants to dress up to match her books. It must come rather expensive."

"No, that's where Jennifer is so clever," said her mother. "She just alters things, that's all, and sort of fits her face to match the things she's wearing. When her hair is just straggly and fixed up with combs I guess she's copying one of those red-haired, artistic women who talk pages about their souls and being misunderstood. Hussies, every one of them, I always say. I should put a stop to it, only Jennifer soon gets tired and doesn't keep it up long."

"What about young Jelks?" asked the other woman in a half-whisper. "What does he think of all this sort of thing?"

Little Mrs. Stubbs threw up her hands with a despairing expression.

"That's the worst of it," she said. "I can't make head or tail of things as they are now. I like Jim Jelks. He's a real nice young fellow, and doing so well for himself, too. I thought when Jennifer took up with him it would be all right, just the very thing, you know; and her father was pleased, too, for he had no end of an idea of young Jelks as a business man. But there—I don't know what to make of things. He comes in every evening as usual, but things aren't the same between them. Jennifer makes him read poetry to her."

"Dear! that sounds bad," was the comment of the visitor. "Jennifer never was one of the spoony sort, I know, but poetry isn't in young Jelks' line at all, I'm sure."

She took her leave just after this, and Mrs. Stubbs returned to the drawing-room, the room that was the joy and pride of her heart, and which Jennifer had lately declared made her feel "positively ill with such a wild riot of colour." Her mother sighed as she looked around.

"Well, thank goodness, *I* haven't got the artistic temperament," was her comment.

She rang for the tea things to be cleared away and took up her knitting. She knitted industriously for "lonely soldiers" out at the Front, and, having no boy herself, "mothered" quite a number of other rather friendless lads, who voted her "a real good sort," and told her all their troubles. She was plump, didn't bother much about clothes so long as they were comfortable, and insisted on doing most of the cooking herself although she had a good maid, consequently Mr. Stubbs found his home pleasant, and regarded his wife as quite a model wife and mother.

"Mr. Jelks has just come, ma'am," said the domestic. "He's in the master's room. Asked if he might write a note. And Miss Jennifer's upstairs, and—" the maid paused, not being quite sure whether she should break through the convention of not giving an opinion on anything concerning the household, then catching a gleam in Mrs. Stubb's eye, she added: "I don't believe Miss Jennifer's coming down again, ma'am; she's reading."

Mrs. Stubbs moved towards the door.

"I'll go up and see her," she said.

But she turned the handle of the door which led into her husband's little snuggery in which a young man was seated with his head in his hands. Hearing the door open he sprang up, his face eager, but Mrs. Stubbs noted that the light died from his eyes as he saw who was there. Evidently he had expected Jennifer.

"Hello, Jimmy!" she said, shaking hands cordially. "You're early this evening. Have you had tea?"

He nodded.

"I'm going into the Army," he said in a subdued voice, and she stared at him in astonishment.

"But you can't!" she exclaimed. "They refused you five times. They won't have you, Jimmy. Your lameness——"

"They'll perhaps take me now for clerical work," he said. "Anyhow, I'm going to try and get in again. I came round to tell Jennifer."

Mrs. Stubbs looked at him searchingly.

"The business—what about that?" she asked. "Seems to me, Jimmy, you're doing just as much good for your country by carrying on and keeping things going as you'd be doing clerical work in the Army. Is it," she hesitated, "is it anything about Jennifer?"

He looked relieved at her query.

"Jennifer has changed," he said. "I feel she thinks I'm a slacker. I believe she has a notion I'm malingering——"

"No, no, Jimmy," broke in Mrs. Stubbs, "not that. Jennifer doesn't think that, I know. It's—it's—only the artistic temperament, Jimmy."

He looked at her rather blankly.

"But Jennifer has such funny ideas lately," he confided. "She won't let me kiss her, for instance, and she says such rummy things."

Suddenly Mrs. Stubbs had an idea, and her eyes flashed.

"Just wait, Jimmy," she cried, "just wait a minute, will you? I've thought of something."

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Jimmy came in on the second Sunday evening, but it was a new Jimmy. He wore a brown velveteen coat, a flowing tie, spotted orange and black . . . . and talked rather wildly on poets and poetry of which Jennifer had never heard before. [*Page 597, col. 1.*]

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He waited, and there was silence in the little room for the space of a few minutes. But Mrs. Stubbs' eyes were twinkling.

"Jimmy," she said, "do you think you could act?"

He looked bewildered.

"I don't mean on the stage," she explained, "but just to play up, pretend to Jennifer you are different, that you've got the artistic temperament, too——"

"What!" he cried, "and read poetry? I'm sick of those books she's lent me. Queer johnnies poets must be to think of the things they do."

Mrs. Stubbs nodded her head mysteriously.

"You listen to me," she said, and her eyes twinkled again.

He listened.

But as he listened his eyes began to twinkle, too. The fun of the thing appealed to him. Once only did he look troubled.

"Suppose she finds out it's all bunkum?" he said. "Jennifer would never forgive me. She'd think I was laughing at her. And I'm not," he cried plaintively; "it's only that I liked her ten times better when she was just Jennifer, and didn't have all these queer ideas."

"You leave it to me," said Mrs. Stubbs. "I believe Jennifer will get sick and tired of the whole thing before a fortnight is up. It's the things we haven't got and can't have we always want. Just think for yourself and you'll see that's so. Why, the things that are easily come by are never thought much of, as you know very well."

He nodded.

"It won't be easy," he confided. "It'll be jolly hard for me to dress up and all that sort of rot, still——"

"Still, if it means getting Jennifer you won't mind, I know," she rejoined brightly. "I tell you, Jimmy, you'll enjoy the fun of the thing before you've finished."

And when Jennifer trailed down three-quarters-of-an-hour afterwards it was to find Jimmy gone.

"Surely you didn't expect the poor fellow to wait all this time?" said her mother reproachfully. "Besides, I think he wanted to take you to a poetry meeting somewhere——"

In her surprise Jennifer forgot the Jane Austen pose.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "Jimmy and poetry!"

"And why not?" snapped Mrs. Stubbs. "I'm sure Jimmy looked—well, to use your own words—quite as though he'd got the artistic temperament."

Jennifer almost sat down in her astonishment. But she made no comment, and all that evening she was very quiet. True, she held a book of poems in her hands, apparently intent on its pages, but little Mrs. Stubbs' shrewd eyes took in the fact that Jennifer rarely turned over a single leaf, also that from time to time her eyes wandered to the clock.

The next day a note for Jennifer was delivered by hand.

DEAREST JENNIFER (it ran), Please forgive me, but I fear I shall not be able to come round this evening, as I have promised to take the chair at the Omár Kháyyam Society at Little Ditchling. I am deeply indebted to you for your introduction to the tent-maker and his fugitive thoughts. Happily the shears of Fate have cut the tent-ropes of my former aimless existence, and I trust that the broker of Hope will have greater and more enduring truths for me to peruse. Adieu until to-morrow. I send you all my love.

JIM.

Jennifer let the epistle drop into her lap, and a little gasp of bewilderment parted her lips. Jimmy and Omár Kháyyam! It seemed incredible. Jennifer was not sure if she liked it. Jimmy's notes to her had always been like himself, bluff, breezy, but decidedly affectionate; besides—oh, it was very puzzling, but when she had lent him her little purple, morocco-covered Omár he had sniffed and said he "couldn't make head nor tail of the thing, except that the old chap was rather a rip over the girls and liked his glass." And all the time, so it now seemed, Jimmy had been conversant with poetry lovers, after all.

It was fully a week before Jennifer saw Jimmy again, and during that time she had grown tired of the Jane Austen period, toyed with Sudermann and Ibsen, and finally decided that the "open air phase" was well worth cultivating, especially now Jimmy seemed so taken up with Little Ditchling and its manifold literary and poetical societies. Little Ditchling was a seven-mile walk away, but Jimmy had a motor-bicycle. He had also a side-car, and Jennifer could not understand why he should no longer care for her society, even if he did have to take the chair at various meetings. Her cheeks grew pink and she let her imagination run riot in possibilities.

Another girl!

She tossed her head. Well, of course, if Jimmy chose to philander, let him do so. She didn't care. She still had her precious books, her prints, her Futurist drawings, her black and brown room, her——

Then she remembered she hadn't read a word of any of her favourites for three whole days. She tossed her head again, went down town to the library and got out a couple of volumes of Balzac. Jennifer had little acquaintance with French authors, living or dead, but she thought by rubbing up her

["THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT" continued overleaf.]

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French she might adopt an incomprehensible phase for Jimmy's return.

It was on the way back from the library that she saw that tweed costume in Nunn's window, a real tailor-made, leather-bound coat and skirt with a "sporty" type of hat to match, and decided to have it copied. That, and the addition of a pair of brogues, settled the "open-air phase," and Jennifer found the long walks she took distinctly invigorating.

But she saw nothing of Jimmy, nor could she discover anyone in Little Ditchling who had ever heard of the Omár Khayyam Society. The place was full of soldiers, billeted there, and the Y.M.C.A. tent and a certain "Cheery Dog's Club" seemed the only possible approach to a gathering of any kind whatever.

"Most extraordinary!" said Jennifer to herself. "Of course, Jimmy would never tell me a thing that wasn't true, but it's awfully strange, all the same."

Jimmy came in on the second Sunday evening, but it was a new Jimmy. He wore a brown velveteen coat, a flowing tie, spotted orange and black, and with his new clothes he seemed to have adopted new manners. He was absent-minded, forgot all the little courtesies to which he had accustomed Jennifer, and talked rather wildly on poets and poetry of which Jennifer had never heard before, which fact left her with an uncomfortable feeling that she really didn't know as much as she had imagined. She grew flustered and confused as Jimmy hurled line after line at her, or asked a question about some poem from which she had never even seen a quotation. By the time he took his leave Jennifer was feeling she had never really known Jimmy, and for the first time since her black and tan bedroom had been arranged she sat long before her mirror, staring hard at herself in the glass. Usually a book of quotations lay at her elbow, into which she dipped as she brushed her hair. This evening she did not even open the book.

"I wonder——" she mused.

Then she gave a tiny shiver. She didn't like Jimmy in a velvet coat and a flowing tie. She preferred him in his neat blue serge, closely-trimmed hair, and stiff white collar. She shivered again. It might be her fancy, but it certainly seemed as though Jimmy was letting his hair grow, and she abhorred men with long hair. Ugh! It was nearly as bad as dirty finger nails; indeed, in Jennifer's mind the two went together.

The artistic temperament might be all very well for women, but for men—Jennifer shivered again.

The next morning she astonished her mother by coming out into the kitchen whilst she was preparing a special casserole for the evening. Mr. Stubbs vowed no woman on earth could concoct a casserole like those his wife made. Jennifer's mouth looked wistful.

"Mummy," she said (it was quite a long time since she had said "Mummy," and Mrs. Stubbs' heart leapt), "Mummy, wouldn't you like me to help you? I—I've got an idea I should like to do things in the house."

"Bless your heart, so you shall," cried the delighted Mrs. Stubbs. "Why, there's nothing like it for a girl, only"—she hesitated—"I'm afraid you ought to put something over your dress, Jennifer."

"I'll borrow one of your aprons, Mummy, if I may," said the girl, and whilst Jennifer went to get this her mother looked absolutely bewildered.

"What's come to the child?" she asked. "Why, it was only a week or two ago she told me my cooking overalls set her teeth on edge. Just because they've got pink flowers mixed up with blue! However——" and she smiled again as Jennifer reappeared.

"How's the chicken, father?" asked Mrs. Stubbs that night at dinner.

"Never had a better casserole of chicken in all my life," said the old man, beaming. "It's got just the right spicy and oniony taste. Takes you, mother, to make a casserole. Why the *chef* at the Carlton wouldn't beat it."

"Jennifer made it to-day," said Mrs. Stubbs, twinkling.

Her husband dropped his knife and fork.

"Good Lord! you don't say so," he cried. "Why, Jennifer, I thought you didn't like cooking. I thought you were wrapped up in your music and poetry and all those jim-crow things you've got mixed up in lately. Tell you what, my girl, those sort of accomplishments aren't worth a bean compared with those your mother knows how to manage."

Jennifer's cheeks flushed.

"Anybody can cook," she said. "Anybody can manage a house. It's donkey's work."

Her father rapped the table with the handle of his knife. His eyes flashed.

"That's what you think," he retorted. "Donkey's work, is it? There's cooking *and* cooking, and there's homes *and* homes. I'm what the world calls a successful business man; I daresay I've saved money enough to do and have pretty much what I want, but I tell you this, Jennifer, and I'm serious, too—your mother has made home such a home all these years that I've never wanted anything else. My home has been the best little bit of the world to me, and you and your

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mother all I've wanted beside. Now, then, Jennifer," and he leant forward slightly, "the woman who can do that for a man hasn't been doing donkey's work. Her job couldn't be done by anybody else, and she knows it."

Jennifer said nothing, but stealing a glance at her mother's flushed and smiling face she felt her heart give a flutter. After all, it was something to have one's husband look at one like that, and Jennifer wondered if she and Jimmy——

Then she thrust the thought away. She and Jimmy! Why, Jimmy with his Omár Khayyam Society, and poetry circles, wouldn't bother about a wife who could cook and play old-fashioned songs and knit socks for soldiers. He wanted—well, a woman with an artistic temperament—and somehow, she couldn't explain why, Jennifer had a lonely little ache, and badly wanted to be just an ordinary lovable woman.

Watching her father as he held a skein of wool for her mother to wind, Jennifer came to the conclusion that, after all, the drawing-room wasn't so bad by lamplight. It was cosy, comfortable, home-like, and the big, fat cushions were deliciously soft. Her own black and tan room had "atmosphere," but there wasn't a comfortable place to sit in it, and those Futurist drawings were rather distracting when one had a headache. Leaning back, Jennifer watched her parents, and thought what a charming pair they made. Both plump, getting grey, and making no effort to hide their years.

A queer feeling rose in her throat. Getting up suddenly she crossed over and kissed them both. Then she left the room.

"What's up with Jennifer?" asked her father. "Bit odd to-night!"

Her mother smiled mysteriously.

"I think she misses Jimmy," she said quietly. "He's coming in presently, but she doesn't know."

"What are you and Jimmy playing at?" he asked. "You two seem pretty thick, plotting and planning together. What is it?"

But she only laughed again.

"You'll see," she responded. "Just wait a few more days, that's all."

Jimmy looked very self-conscious when he did come in, and Jennifer was still upstairs.

"Great Scott! Jimmy!" exclaimed Mr. Stubbs, "whatever are you dressed up like that for? Bit grand, aren't you?"

The young man swaggered across the room.

"Pity it isn't daylight," he said. "They look superb then, but you can't see so well in this light. Purple! What do you think of it? Purple face-cloth for a dress-suit, velvet collar, braided trousers. Ripping idea of yours, Mrs. Stubbs."

The old man looked round at his wife.

"So this is some more of the game, eh?" he asked, and she nodded.

"He looks quite a 'nut,' doesn't he, father?" she said. "I wonder what Jennifer will think of this."

Mr. Stubbs laughed.

"So he is following Jennifer's example," he said, and he chuckled as he watched Jennifer's face when she did appear. Afterwards, he declared, it was as good as a play to watch the two young people, she bewildered and a little shy, for such a resplendent Jimmy had never appeared before, he, slightly awkward at first, then warming to his part, playing the young "nut" to perfection. As both parents agreed afterwards, really Jennifer was nowhere in it. Jimmy out-Heroded Herod where the artistic temperament was concerned

It was long past midnight before he took himself off, and Jennifer bade her parents good-night in a very subdued voice, and went straight up to her own room. Again she shivered as the black and tan met her, and with a petulant gesture she took down several Futurist pictures from the walls. Instead of putting on the black kimono with gold embroideries she had had made to match the room, she dragged out an old dressing-gown, warm and comfortable, but by no means elegant, and, lighting her gas-fire, crouched down on the floor, tucking her feet beneath her.

"I don't believe Jimmy has really stopped loving me," she said.

She reached out his photograph from the drawer in which she had placed it—she had put all portraits away as they spoilt the artistic effect—looked at it for quite a long time, at first critically, then with quite a different expression.

It may as well be owned here that Jennifer slept with it beneath her pillow that night.

It was the very next day Jennifer was walking along the Little Ditchling Road when she heard the *thud-thud* of a motor-cycle behind, and instinctively stepped aside to avoid being splattered, but as the machine dashed by, her heart gave a quick leap, for its rider was Jimmy! Whether he recognised her or not she was not sure, but he took no notice, and vanished round the curve in the road whilst Jennifer walked on feeling oddly sick at heart.

Ten minutes later, however, as she, too, rounded the corner, a cry broke from her lips; for one moment she stood still, rooted to the spot as though by fear, then rushing forward she went down on her knees beside the

["THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT" continued overleaf]

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crumpled-up form lying on the grass, the machine overturned beside him.

"Oh, Jimmy! Jimmy!" she cried. "Are you hurt? Jimmy, darling, are you hurt?"

He neither moved nor spoke, but his face was blood-stained and the girl gave a pitiful little cry.

"Jimmy, darling, my darling!" she cried again, wiping his face tenderly with her wisp of a handkerchief. "Oh, speak to me! Do look at me——"

A tear fell on his face, and bending over him she kissed his forehead.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she moaned.

It was then Jimmy opened his eyes.

For a second he looked bewildered, then he smiled.

"Hullo, Jennifer, darling!" he said. "How did you get here? Had a bit of a spill. Must have fainted, I suppose."

He tried to get up, but gave a groan, and Jennifer forgot everything except the desire to help him, so that in ten minutes' time it was just as though there had never been any trouble between them, and Jennifer with her arm through his was helping him to limp to the machine, which she found was uninjured.

"I think I can manage to ride her home," he said. "You stick on behind, Jennifer, like you did——"

There he paused. But Jennifer and he reached home in safety.

"Yes," laughed Jimmy that evening when Mrs. Stubbs sat beside him and patted his hand, "you can do a lot with the artistic temperament, and I planned that spill beautifully, timed it to happen just at that particular spot, too, but I didn't reckon on twisting my ankle like this. However," and he smiled whimsically, "it'll mean I shall see a lot of Jennifer for a week, at any rate."

Mrs. Stubbs chuckled.

"If you play your cards well, Jimmy, you'll keep her now," she said. "The ministering angel note is too good for her to miss."

"Oh, bless you," cried Jimmy, "I've got her right enough. That artistic temperament stunt of hers is finished, you'll see. The next thing'll be wedding-bells and orange blossoms, for I've told her if she won't marry me now I'll go back to Omár Kháyyam and Little Ditchling. We really called the soldiers' club there the O.K. Club, but it doesn't mean what she thinks it means. I started the thing as a joke and it caught on tremendously. But you'll see she'll agree to a wedding soon."

And Jimmy was right. Jennifer and her mother were choosing wall-papers and cretonnes the other day, and it was Jennifer herself who remarked:

"Oh, no, mother, I won't have that. I'd rather have something a bit more cheerful—more like the drawing-room at home!"

'TILDA.

You wouldn't know our 'Tilda since she went upon the stage,
The folks that come from Lunnon say that there she's quite the rage;
She speaks just like a lady, and her clothes are made of silk,
And round her neck are diamonds, and pearls as white as milk.

She rides about in motor-cars like any duchess might,
And lords and earls they come in crowds to watch her ev'ry night;
She says she's goin' to marry one—I hope it isn't true;
To have a lord for son-in-law I'd scarce know what to do!

But since she's been to Lunnon Town our 'Tilda's changed her name,
She says the name of 'Tilda James would never bring her fame:
And now she's known as Miss De Vere, and you should hear folks say:
"Why, there's the actress, Rose De Vere, who's acting in that play!"

She somehow seems so different, so far away and smart,
There's loneliness and mother-love a-lying in my heart;
I'm just about as proud of her as anyone could be,
And though to other folks she's grand she's just a child to me.

Amie Allen.

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SAR'ANN'S LOAN.

By Nathan Clover.

"Thou art my love, my life, my heart,
The very eyes of me;
And hast command of every part
To live and die for thee."

I.

Sar'ann had taken up life earlier than most. She had indeed begun it when at the early age of four she had wheeled this year's baby before her and towed last year's baby behind her, along the country lanes, while "mamma" was out washing, not herself, which was really necessary, but other people's clothes.

"Dear, dear!" had ejaculated the Squire's lady, when one day she had watched her coachman pull up the three howling atoms from the depth of a ditch, from which, it being deep in mud, they came out with an audible *plop!* like so many corks. "How *can* these people be so careless with regard to their children? Really, one is impelled to believe they are quite incapable of cherishing one spark of true motherly love for the little ones. There, there, there, don't cry! See, here's a penny for you, little girl, and now *mind* you're more careful in future. *So* ridiculous, you know, dear," she had added later to her husband, "of these common people to have so many children."

Her husband said nothing, though, like the parrot, he may possibly have thought the more, as his troubled mind turned to that one delicate specimen of his fine, old race cradled above stairs, who might or might not—so precarious was his belaced and benursed existence—live to succeed his kindly, slow-moving, slow-thinking father.

"But, of course, if they didn't," inconsequentially went on his lady, helping herself to grapes, "I suppose it *would* make it rather difficult to obtain domestic servants, and I must say that Mrs. Stiggins (Sar'ann's mother) has a due regard for that state of life in which she has always been used to live. It is far better to be content with that condition of life which Providence"—thoughtfully peeling a peach—"has seen fit to bestow upon us." An opinion in which she seemed ratified when some years later Sar'ann, a trifle stunted and lopsided through the nursing of successive brothers, took service at the Hall as kitchen-maid, and having been brought up to expect nothing from life, was therefore not ungrateful for small mercies.

"Not a treasure, no, oh, no!" said the housekeeper when questioned on the subject by "the lady," "far from it—but cheerful and willing, and not a bad little soul as girls go."

"I'm very glad to hear it, Mrs. King, very glad indeed, but, dear me! I do wish she was not quite such a homely little thing."

This wish Sar'ann often echoed herself when, looking in the jaded mirror allotted to the kitchen-maid, she saw reflected there her own sandy, freckled, pug-nosed little countenance. "For who, as Cook says, would ever care to walk out with *that?*" sighed she, and thought with a pang of the new house-maid whose pretty face had secured for her the village beau, and the cook whose beautiful hair had bound the young policeman to her with chains of living gold.

"But there ain't no hope for me," went on Sar'ann sorrowfully, "for I ain't got nothing to make a feller love me."

And then, oddly enough, when she had given up hope and taken to more sober hats and a front seat in chapel, *he* appeared in the shape of a new farm labourer, and what mattered it if he was just as undersized and a good deal more sandy and freckled than she so long as he loved her and told her so beneath the glorious oaks in the great park that was to them the land enchanted, because, "homely" as they were, they saw it through that light which never yet has shone on land or sea? Nothing! So they strolled there together and dreamt of the time when they should possess a little home and a little garden of their own where downy heads as well as flowers—oh, Mrs. Grundy!—should blossom in the sun.

"And I 'ope, dear," said Sar'ann, very beautifully and simply, "that they'll all be

["SAR'ANN'S LOAN" continued overleaf.]

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boys, for the world is a 'ard place for girls."

"But if they're boys they'll leave us to get married," objected Jim.

"While the girls'll ave to wait to be as't," cried out Sar'ann. "Oh, Jim, if you fellers only knew!"

"My darlin'!" whispered Jim, so it's to be supposed he did know, or had guessed, something of the agony of that time of waiting.

"Arn't they too ridiculous and common for words?" cried out the Squire's lady, as the carriage with its pair of high-stepping bays went whirling by the lovers as they walked in the leafy lane one hot night in July.

II.

"Lucille," said the inattentive Squire, lifting his eyes from the paper, "Lucille, I do believe there's going to be war!"

"But they won't send the Guards, Tom, they won't send the Guards?" cried she in terror, for that was the corps which her only son, now eighteen, had chosen wherein to pass through that military probation necessary to all true cadets of that historic house which they were now so rapidly nearing. But the Squire, lifting his eyes, looked beyond her to where the grey walls rose so fair and stately in the gilding evening sun, and deep in their leisurely, bovine depths a red spark grew to life.

"I hope they will," said he. "With all my heart, I hope they will!"

"Tom, Tom, he is our only one."

"Do I not know it?" sternly. "Have I not grieved over it? and yet—and yet—heaven knows I do not for one moment grudge him to the—King—God bless him!" finished the Squire, showing himself to be not the least noble of a noble race and house.

"But *I* can't 'elp being glad, Jim," cried out Sar'ann, when the young heir had really gone and she had heard his mother passing from one raving fit of hysteria to another and seen the white, drawn agony on the Squire's face, "I can't 'elp being glad, dear, that you're too little an' too thin-chested to go an' join."

"That's a nice sort of thing for a girl to say to her feller," growled Jim bitterly. It was over this they had their first quarrel, and though later they kissed again with tears, the shadow of it lay across the sunshine of their courtship as palpably as the shadow of the Great War lay across the sunny, smiling harvest fields, and Sar'ann feeling it and groping after knowledge of a man's heart, took to the newspapers and the quiet corners of the great house wherein to learn something of its complexities. Presumably she profited by the experience, for one day, when they sat together beneath the big oaks and watched the brown deer go drifting by, she said softly, her eyes upon them, her red, rough hands hard-clasped: "Jim, they—they've lowered the standard."

"Sar'ann!" he cried. "Sar'ann! Then you wouldn't 'old me back?"

"No, Jim," said she, and saw the deer go dimly by as through a silver rain.

If Jim had looked homely in mufti, the effect of him in khaki was truly startling, and even the kindly Squire could not forbear a smile when he stopped the lovers in the lane wherein the leaves now lay thick, to speak a cordial word of kindly greeting and approval to the much-embarrassed lad.

"It's a fine thing you are doing, my lad, a fine thing—and I know you'll never regret it, even though there are hard, hard times ahead of you, but it's the women who are going to suffer most in this war as—God knows!—they have done in all others," and turning, he raised his hat to Sar'ann's wonderfully gorgeous, wholly pathetic little figure, adding softly: "My dear, it's a great gift you're offering to your King and Country, but God grant that it may only be 'a loan.'"

"'E broke my 'eart," sobbed Sar'ann. "But, oh, Jim, 'e made me feel it reely was worth while!"

And that feeling abode with her even when Jim was serving among the winter snows "somewhere in France" and sent her ill-spelt and ill-written letters from a place he designated a trench, which he said might have been as cosy as my lady's drawing-room if it hadn't been for the mud and the shells, and as time passed and he still went unscathed, Sar'ann began to breathe more freely.

Perhaps he was going to get through safely, after all, she thought, and then one day in March when she stood peeling potatoes and looking up at the promise of spring as foretold by the great horse-chestnut tree by the trough in the stable-yard, they—the other servants—were all around her, and cook held a paper in her shaking hand.

"Don't tell me!" screamed Sar'ann in such a dreadful voice and with such a dreadful look that they all fell away from her. "Don't tell me!"

But it had to be told how among that list of "gifts accepted," Jim's name figured among the others.

"*Don't* cry like that, dear," wept the pretty young housemaid, who was crying just as

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hard. "Don't—for he died so beautifully—died a 'ero—'e died in saving the young master, who was lying wounded on the field. Oh my! Oh my! But it *is* so 'ard!"

They were all so kind to her they fairly broke her heart, and so, at length, being utterly unable to bear it any longer, she craved permission to go across the fields to that mother who had never once shown her anything save sober indifference or drunken fury. There, at least, she thought she might find an antidote for her intolerable pain, but when they had pinned on her hat—lop-sided—and buttoned her into her coat and put on her gloves—wrong side before—and she was ready to go, Madam sent for her, and because she had never once in the whole of her simple life thought of disregarding the gentry's behests she went to face Madam and Madam's lorgnette in Madam's gorgeous room, and Madam, because of her very real joy was more incoherent and "malapropish" than ever.

"Such a dreadful thing," she ran on—"for your—er—er—lover to be killed, of course, but it *must*, I am *quite* sure be a great comfort to you to feel that he died in saving the young master—*my son*. Oh, Tom, I was just telling this—er—er—young person how glad she ought to be to know her lover died in such an honourable cause—why, *Tom!*"

For Tom had led the shaking, sobbing girl out, and with the door shut on his wife's amazed stare, was looking pitifully down into the distorted young face.

"My dear," he said, "I wish I could thank you—but I can't. For that which you and your hero-lover have given to me is a thing ineffable. God pity you—as I do—God comfort you—as—as—I—cannot. . . ."

His voice broke, and he was gone to the chapel to kneel in thankful prayer like the simple gentleman he was.

"But I always said tha'd be an old maid," said her mother, dropping tears into her rum and tea, "always! For tha' was always an ugly wench—and shiftless! Well, there, I don't suppose now tha'd even thought of asking t'cook whether there was any bits o' odds and ends out t'pantry that'd do for t'childer."

"Oh, mamma! 'Ow could I think o' aught when *'e's* dead?" burst out poor Sar'ann, and fled for shelter to that frowsy little chamber where "this year's baby" slept the sleep of innocence among the tumbled clothes.

"Sar'ann!" rose her mother's strident voice. "When tha comes down bring't babby, wilt?"

"Ay," called Sar'ann, and lowering her sandy head raised the baby's dimpled fist to rest there. So, if it had not been for this dreadful war might she herself have been blessed one day, so should she never be blessed now!

"Sar'ann! Art coming or art going ter be all day? Sar'ann!"

"Coming!" cried she, and stooping for the baby, picked up with it the burden of her life, uncomplaining and patient as ever.

* * * * *

"Sar'ann," said the housemaid a week or so later, "here's a letter for you."

"For me?" said Sar'ann, and dropping the brush began to tremble. "For me? Oh, 'Annah, open it for me—do!"

So Hannah opened it, and then, dropping it, ran to her and held her close.

"It's from a nurse!" she cried. "And 'e's alive, Sar'ann, alive!—but wouldn't let you know—says the nurse—'cause 'e's lost a h'arm and one h'eye—and is lame of one leg, and 'e thinks you might think you'd *'ave* to marry 'im—an' be afraid——"

"Afraid!" said Sar'ann. "Afraid!"

* * * * *

"Blind in one eye?" she murmured, when a day later she knelt beside his bed in that sweet little solitude the understanding nurse had been able to form about them. "My dear, what's that when I'd thought thee blind in both for ever? Only one arm? Well, then, t'other'll 'ave to learn to clip me all the closer—me who'd thought to go un-'eld to the end of my days! Lame o' one leg? Ay, but not too lame, I'll reckon, to look after th' 'ouse and t'bit o' dinner, an' t' garden and t'babbies—when they come—whiles I go out working wi' these ten strong fingers o' mine to earn t'rent and that bit o' summit t'ate as'll be all we'll need——"

"Sar'ann! I can't—I can't——"

"'Ush!" said she, and then suddenly Sar'ann, plain, pug-nosed, freckled, little Sar'ann became divine. "For what's work but God's own blessing when I've got *you*—an' the little 'ome an' th' promise o't babbies to come?" finished she.

"Sar'ann! Sar'ann!" Then utter silence, and the little understanding nurse passing by with the doctor looked back with a tremulous smile.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

A Few Words in Confidence.

ALL ABOUT ALLOTMENTS.

Now that so many people are fired with an enthusiasm for growing their own fruit and vegetables, a book that deals in a practical and popular manner with the subject of allotment gardening comes as a godsend. "The Allotment Book," by Walter Brett, tells you just how to make the most of your land, gives you minute directions as to planting and tending your crops, and should be the salvation of any budding gardener who studies it carefully. The book, published by this firm, costs only a shilling, and so is within the reach of everyone.

THE REAL THING.

They *are* the real thing, the collection of war stories by W. Douglas Newton, just published at one shilling under the title of "Over the Top." They are essentially stories that grip, stories that bring home the conditions obtaining at the Front with almost unimaginable vividness. From time to time we have published stories by this author in the ROYAL; you probably remember them—you are bound to remember them—they are not the kind of stories one forgets. This new collection is every bit as excellent. Mr. Newton has caught the spirit of the trenches, has given us the real soldier—courageous and intensely human—has wedded pathos and drama, and in so doing revealed many things that were hid.

PLEASE ORDER YOUR COPIES!

Sugar is not the only scarce commodity nowadays. As you probably know, there is a serious shortage of paper, wherefore it is imperative we print only as many copies as we actually require. I appeal to you to help us—you can so easily do it—simply by ordering your copy, or copies, in advance.

Don't forget, will you? It's really most important.

RESULT OF THE "LOVE-LETTER" COMPETITION.

You will remember that in our November Number Miss Mabel Funston, the charming young actress, offered prizes for the best love-letters written to her by men of our fighting forces. Both the Army and Navy rose to the occasion magnificently, and the result has been a continuous bombardment of love-letters.

What struck me most was the amazing excellence of the letters, whether due to natural aptitude with the pen or—dare I suggest it?—a wealth of experience, is not for me to say. The high standard of merit—forgive a phrase so reminiscent of the examination room!—made the choice of prizewinners a difficult task, but after mature deliberation Miss Funston has selected the fortunate recipients to whom the watches and signed photographs have accordingly been sent.

For obvious reasons it is impossible to publish the names of the prizewinners; suffice it to say that prizes were won by soldiers in the following:

> Lancers; South African Infantry; Royal Flying Corps; Australian Field Artillery; Australian Imperial Force; Royal Garrison Artillery (2 prizes); *Chasseurs à pied* (French Army); East Surreys; N.Z. Field Artillery; 1st Australian Division; Divisional Artillery; 1st Canadian Division; Cameron Highlanders; Middlesex Regiment; King Edward's Horse; Munster Fusiliers;

while the Navy's share of the spoils goes to two sailors who request that the names of their ships shall not be stated.

Those who have not been lucky enough to win prizes may rest assured their efforts were appreciated. This is Miss Funston's

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message to them, as to the victors in the struggle:

"DEAR FIGHTING MEN,

I want to thank you all for the delightful love-letters you have sent me. Some of them were amusing, some genuinely touching, and all magnificently cheery. As for your gratitude, I was quite overwhelmed by such warm appreciation of my little competition, and I am proud to think it gave you such pleasure to write to me.

Please believe that I appreciate *all* the letters, whether they won prizes or not, and thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you are doing for me and all the other women at home in England.

Wishing you luck and a safe return,

MABEL FUNSTON."

Below are a few extracts from some of the prizewinning letters. I commend them to all of you—each is a gem in its way.

One of our heroes in blue is responsible for the following charming effort:

"MY OWN ADORABLE LOVELY LADY,

When I lay awake at night, so longing and longing to see you again, I often wonder how you would like to be in this part of the world, and although I am so wanting you, I don't think that I'd like you—so dainty and so sweet as you are—to be here. It isn't nice enough for my dear one, and I love to think of you as *Where Home Is*. So that, if I should ever get leave, or when we all come Home—and that is always the crowning joy at the back of our minds—I can dream that Leave is You, that Home is You, that everything that matters is You. And when I come to you, I feel that I should like first to have gone through it all—to have finished the job. . . .

In your next letter send me something of your very own just to keep me going—a little handkerchief . . . or a tiny curl from behind one of the enchanting little ears of you.

Dieu vous garde, my beautiful, my Love and my Sweetheart, and keep you safe for me.

Your own adoring

MAN."

Here is one from a gallant Colonial Sergeant:

"DEAR,

Whether your eyes are brown as tulips in the rain or blue as violets washed by tears, I love you. It is dear of you to think of me—one of millions who are fighting just because there are girls like you to fight for. Have you ever considered what brought the Australians twelve thousand miles to take part in a war which seemed to them a very long way off and only remotely connected with their interests? My dear, it was because your lips were red and soft and the most desirable things in the world; and in our careless way we realised that you were in danger . . .

And when you looked at me from the pages of the ROYAL MAGAZINE there came again the inspiration, there came the incentive anew, to see the war through to a successful ending, that you may have the laughter brought back to those dear solemn eyes.

For I love you best when you are happy, though I love you the more that you have need of love—and me.

A LOVER WHO CAME ACROSS THE WORLD FOR YOU."

From an admirer in the R.F.C. comes a poetic tribute:

"MY DREAM GIRL,

I have seen you hears of times (across the footlights) in dear old London, and I know by heart all your very own bewitching little ways. Your gestures, your sunny smile, your voice, your laughing eyes, your graceful movement—it is all engraven in my heart—a delightful picture; from the glint of your wavy hair down to your dainty feet—just you! my Dream Girl, and you have cheered me often when things were blue . . .

You are always my Dream Girl, and there is nothing I like better than to be able at nightfall to laze in the warmth of the firelight and while smoking to give myself up to thoughts of you, and I picture you again as I saw you in the show—a Vision of Delight! I hear once more the haunting refrain coming from your lips in your own wonderful way—while gazing in the glowing embers or weaving your picture in the fragrant clouds from my Lady Nicotine . . ."

A light-hearted Private adopts the flippant and exuberant strain. He says:

"MY DELICIOUS MISS FUNSTON,

How frightfully jolly of you, old thing, to make such a charming offer. I am a bally old idiot at this sort of thing, so I am told, don't you know? But you've absolutely no idea how you've knocked me over . . .

Now you see I am too absolutely eligible for words—oh, I forgot to mention I have a lovely little house somewhere down Whitechapel way and the dinkiest little place in the country.

I can only say that if you don't consider me I shall go into the depths of my dug-out—and eat bully and biscuits for duration.

Yours most devotedly,

ARCHIBALD WHATNOT."

From a London hospital comes the following, written by a South African Infantryman:

"I dreamt that I saw your wonderful face smile at me shyly and perhaps a little invitingly, and your eyes sparkled, while two adorable dimples twinkled on your cheeks. And as I watched a deep red blush stole quietly up your white neck and covered your face. Perhaps I looked at you too ardently!

Anyhow, I don't care, for you have given me permission to write and tell you all about it.

It has happened before many times in the world's history and why not again?

I love you Mabel . . . .

If you *did* care I would teach you many things that I only half guess myself. You would learn what it is to feel perfect unity between you and I; you would learn the happiness of being in your lover's arms with your glorious eyes growing soft and humid and your whole being tremulous with shy wonder . . . .

I love you, love you, love you, and all my life I shall hold you in my arms (in my imagination), and dream of a wonderful impossibility."

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THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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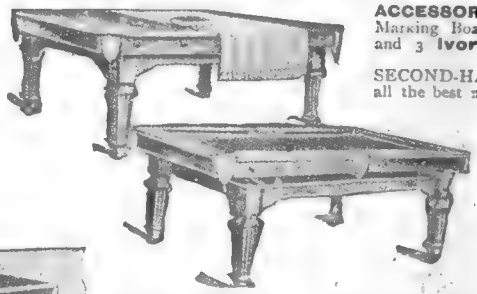

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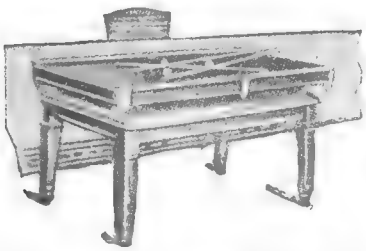

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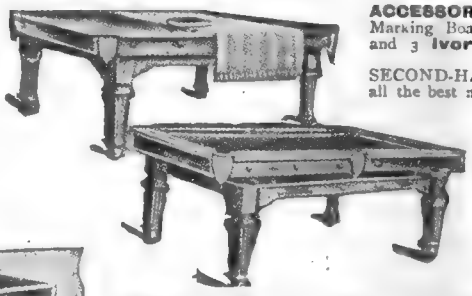

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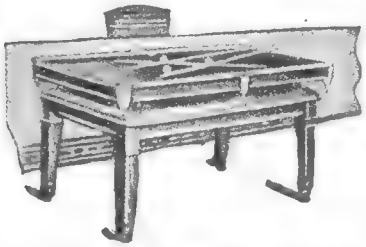

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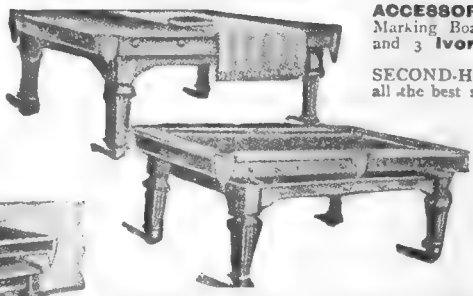

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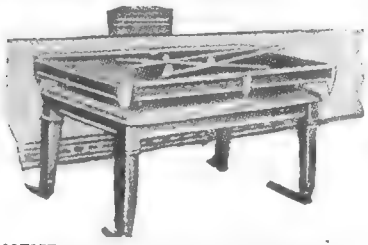

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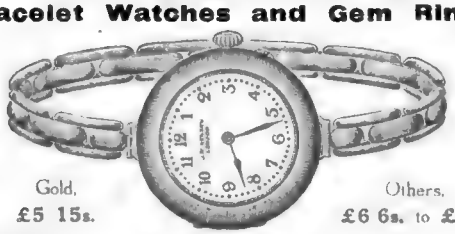

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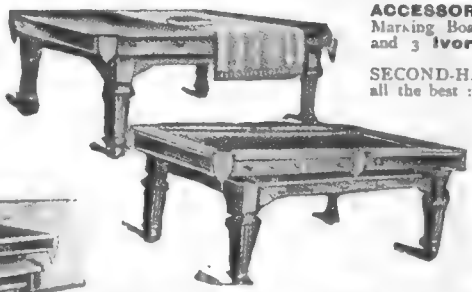

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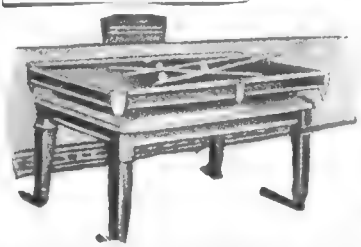

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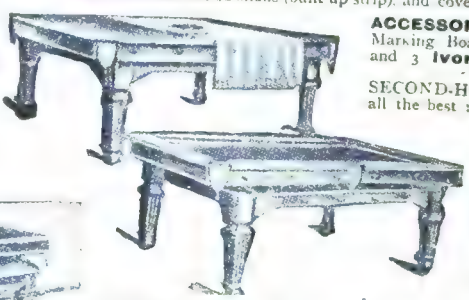

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Beauty Culture

Some Simple Recipes that give Startling Results.

By MIMOSA.

Getting Rid of Feminine Moustaches.

TO women who are annoyed by disfiguring downy hair growths a method of permanently eradicating the same will come as a piece of good news. For this purpose pure powdered pheminol may be used. Almost any chemist should be able to supply an ounce of this drug. The recommended treatment is designed not only to remove the disfiguring growth instantly, leaving no trace, but also to actually kill the hair roots without irritating the skin contract and efface themselves naturally and the greasiness is all gone, leaving the skin smooth, soft and cool. This treatment should be repeated a few times at intervals of several days in order to make sure that the result shall be permanent.

How to have Thick and Pretty Hair.

SOAPS and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed ¼-lb. packages, which retail at half-a-crown. However, as this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, it really works out very cheaply in the end.

Blackheads, Oily Pores, &c.

THE new sparkling face-bath treatment rids the skin of blackheads, oiliness and enlarged pores almost instantly. It is perfectly harmless, pleasant and immediately effective. All you have to do is to drop a stymol tablet, obtained from the chemist's, in a glass of hot water, and after the resulting effervescence has subsided, dab the affected portions of the face freely with the liquid. When you dry the face you will find that the blackheads come right off on the towel, the large pores

Grey Hair Unnecessary.

ONE need not resort to the very questionable expedient of hair dye in order not to have grey hair. The grey hair can easily be changed back to a natural colour in a few days' time merely by the application of a simple, old-fashioned and perfectly harmless home made lotion. Procure from your chemist two ounces of tammalite concentrate and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply this to the hair a few times with a small sponge and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing your grey hair gradually darkening to the desired shade. The lotion is pleasant, not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way.

How to Discard an Unsightly Complexion.

HOW many women exclaim as they behold their ugly complexion in the mirror, "If I could only tear off this old skin!" and, do you know, it is now possible to do that very thing? Not to actually remove the entire skin all of a sudden: that would be too heroic a method and painful too, I imagine. The worn-out cuticle comes off in such tiny particles, and so gradually – requiring about ten days to complete the transformation—it doesn't hurt a bit. Day by day the beautiful complexion underneath comes forth. Marvellous! No matter how muddy, rough, blotchy, or aged your complexion, you can surely discard it by this simple process. Just get some ordinary mercolised wax at your chemist's, apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the mornings.

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SECRETS OF BEAUTY

THE CREAM OF . .
MODERN BEAUTY ADVICE

By MIMOSA

A "Blackhead" Secret.

BLACKHEADS, oily skins, and enlarged pores usually go together, but can be instantly corrected by a unique new process. A tablet of stymol, obtained from the chemist, is dropped in a tumbler of hot water, which will then, of course, "fiz" briskly. When the effervescence has subsided, the face is bathed with the stymol-charged water and then dried with a towel. The offending blackheads, of their own accord, come right off on the towel; the large, oily pores immediately contract and efface themselves naturally. There is no squeezing, forcing, or any drastic action. The skin is left uninjured, smooth, soft, and cool. A few such treatments should be taken at intervals of three or four days thereafter, in order to ensure the permanence of the pleasing result so quickly obtained.

Grey Hair—Home Remedy.

THERE are plenty of reasons why grey hair is not desirable, and plenty of reasons why hair dyes should not be used. But, on the other hand, there is no reason why you should have grey hair if you do not want it. To turn the hair back to a natural colour is really a very simple matter. One has only to get from the chemist two ounces of concentrate of tammalite and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply to the hair with a small sponge for a few nights, and the greyness will gradually disappear. This liquid is not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way. It has been used for generations with most satisfactory results by those who have known the formula.

To Kill Roots of Superfluous Hair.

WOMEN annoyed with disfiguring growths of superfluous hair wish to know not merely how to temporarily remove the hair, but how to kill the hair-roots permanently. For this purpose pure powdered pheminol may be applied directly to the objectionable hair growth. The recommended treatment is designed not only to instantly remove the hair, but also to actually kill the roots, so that the growth will not return. About an ounce of pheminol, obtainable from the chemist, should be sufficient.

The Real Cause of Most Bad Complexions.

IT is an accepted fact that no truly beautiful complexion ever came out of jars and bottles, and the longer one uses cosmetics, the worse the complexion becomes. Skin to be healthy, must breathe. It also must expel, through the pores, its share of the body's effete material. Creams and powders clog the pores, interfering both with elimination and breathing. If more women understood this, there would be fewer self-ruined complexions. If they would use ordinary mercolised wax, instead of cosmetics, they would have natural, healthy complexions.

A Strange Shampoo.

I WAS much interested to learn from this young woman with the beautiful, glossy hair that she never washes it with soap or artificial shampoo powders. Instead, she makes her own shampoo by dissolving a teaspoonful of stallax granules in a cup of hot water. "I make my chemist get the stallax for me," said she. "It comes only in ¼ lb. sealed packages, enough to make up twenty-five or thirty individual shampoos, and it smells so good I could almost eat it." Certainly this little lady's hair did look wonderful, even if she has strange ideas of a shampoo. I am tempted to try the plan myself.

PARKER BELMONT'S CLYNOL BERRIES FOR OBESITY.—[Advt.]

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SOME GOOD ADVICE BY CORPL. T. S. WILBURN, OF THE R.A.M.C.

Like stomach, liver or kidney disorders, and in fact most other bodily ills, rheumatism results simply from accumulation of impurities in the system. Call these germs, microbes, bacilli, toxins, uric acid or anything you like, but they are all impurities and form the primary cause of organic disease. I used to think the only way to stop rheumatic pain was to drug the nerves and vital organs into partial insensibility by taking opiates and narcotic drugs, or rubbing on liniments. But I know better than to recommend such purely temporary expedients now. Instead, take a level teaspoonful of common refined *alkia saltrates* in water every second morning, before breakfast, and notice how quickly it dissolves and permanently clears out of your system all disease-causing impurities and painful uric acid deposits or sharp crystals in stiff joints and sore muscles. There is nothing better to cleanse and regulate a torpid liver or to flush out clogged kidneys. You can get some of this inexpensive, standard compound from any chemist, and I have personally proved that it cures even the most severe case of rheumatism within a few days.—T.S.W.

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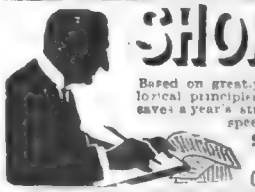
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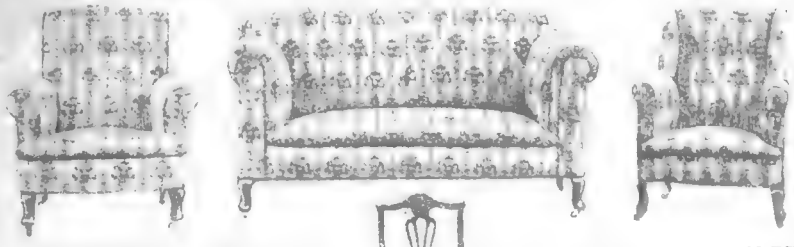

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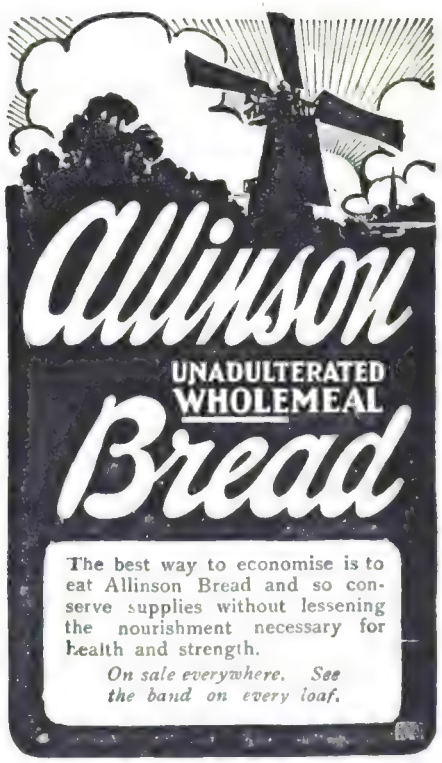

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10/6

An ingenious patent with spiral leather-covered rollers. The perfect principle of razor stropping for Gillette blades.

New blades should be stropped before use, when a delightful shave is certain, and blades last much longer.

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Jute Soles last much longer than any others. Suit House or all Sports, Hospitals, &c. (Noiseless.)

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Say size and length of Walking Shoe. Colour—Brown, Black, or White.

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No Shops. Send P.O. direct. 25 years Advertisers.

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These series of Pens neither scratch nor spurt. They glide over the roughest paper with the ease of a soft lead pencil. Assorted Sample Boxes, 6d., to be obtained from all Stationers. If out of stock, send 7 stamps to the Works, BIRMINGHAM.

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SERIOUS FOOT TORTURES

If you have these in *any form* and think there is the slightest excuse for continuing to suffer—*Just read what the following users of*

REUDEL BATH SALTRATES

say about the only quick, positive, and never-failing cure for sore, tired, tender feet that ache, burn, smart, swell, itch, and develop corns, bunions, callouses, chilblains, or other forms of foot misery. Also, *you can stop any rheumatic pains within ten minutes.*

PROMINENT USERS—SERIES VIII.
ON THE STAGE.

Photo Abdey.

Mlle. **Gaby Deslys**, famous Parisian Artiste, writes:—
I find that a handful dissolved in the bath makes the water Oh! so fragrant, refreshing and invigorating. A teaspoonful in a footbath quickly fills the water with oxygen. When the feet are tired, aching or calloused from walking, sports or dancing, these and even worse foot troubles soon disappear.

Gaby Deslys

Miss **Phyllis Monkman**, the Musical Comedy Actress, writes:—
It is wonderful for tired, tender, aching feet, or any other foot troubles. The medicated and oxygenated water has the same effects as that at famous spas

Phyllis Monkman

Photo, Wrather & Buys.

Photo, Hana.

Mr. **R. G. Knowles**, famous Music Hall Entertainer, writes:—
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R. G. Knowles

Photo, Swain.

Mr. **Harry Pilcer**, the well-known dancer, writes:—
In one week I was able to walk without discomfort, and commence practising my dances again. In three weeks my serious rheumatic attack was completely and permanently cured.

Harry Pilcer

The Reudel Bath Saltrates compound exactly reproduces the highly medicated and oxygenated waters of celebrated curative springs. Prices: 1/9 a half-pound packet, or 2/9 in the pound size. Obtainable from all chemists everywhere who guarantee satisfaction in every case, or will refund your money in full and without question.

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"Vaseline" Trade Mark Registered

Preparations.

Yellow.

This is our regular grade, which is known as pure all over the world.

Bottles ... 3d., 6d., and 10d.

White.

Highly refined.

Bottles ... 6d., 10d., and 1/6

Perfumed White.

No. 1 (bottle in carton) ... 1/-
No. 2 size, handsome bottle in carton, with glass stoppers ... 1/6
White and Quinine Pomade ... 1/-

Pomade.

Blue Seal, 3d. and 7d. bottles
No. 1 size, bottle, in carton, 6d.
No. 2 size, bottle, in carton, 1/-.

If not obtainable locally any article of the value of 1/- and upwards will be sent Post Free to any address in the United Kingdom upon receipt of Postal Order or stamps. Descriptive Booklet, with complete list of "VASELINE" Preparations, and containing many household hints, post free.

ADVICE. For your own safety and satisfaction always insist upon Chesebrough Co.'s own original bottles.

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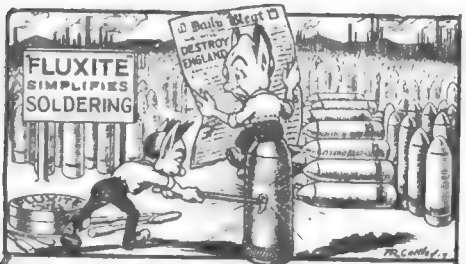

The Bully's Boast
Does not affright;
Of Shells we've most
Thanks to Fluxite.

FLUXITE

is used in the making of shells and other munitions, because it effects a great saving in time; thus increasing the output of labour and plant. *Both* Amateurs and Mechanics the World over *will* have Fluxite. It

SIMPLIFIES SOLDERING

Of all Ironmongers, in tins, 7d., 1/2 and 2/4.

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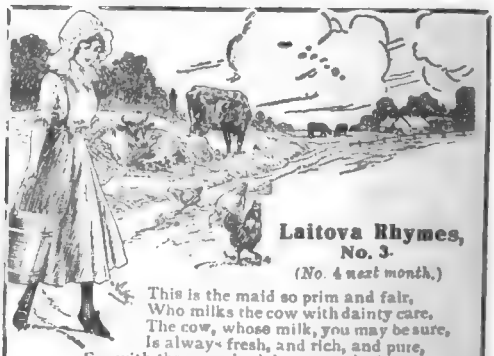

Laitova Rhymes, No. 3.

(No. 4 next month.)

This is the maid so prim and fair,
Who milks the cow with dainty care,
The cow, whose milk, you may be sure,
Is always fresh, and rich, and pure,
For with the eggs, both brown and white,
Laid by the hens with feathers bright,
It goes to make the bairns' delight.

Laitova Lemon Cheese

The daily spread for the children's bread.

Not only is Laitova the most delicious food dainty, but it is the most wholesome and nutritious. It contains just those food elements which growing youngsters need to make them strong and sturdy. They like it, and want more. Give it them. It saves the butter bill.

Order a 9½d. jar from your grocer to-day, and use it instead of butter

SUTCLIFFE & BINGHAM, Ltd.,
B **Cornbrook, Manchester.** ®

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as well as your frocks. Give your skin day by day the benefit of an oxygen bath as provided by the Ven-Yusa treatment. This will promote its clearness and beauty.

Ven-Yusa is designed to prove useful, and not merely ornamental. It has a direct beneficial influence over the complexion, and gives that finishing touch to the toilet which marks the triumph of beauty.

VEN-YUSA
The Oxygen Face Cream

1/- per jar at all Chemists and Stores, or from C. E. Fulford, Ltd., Leeds.

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The Magnetism of Beauty.

Sweet Nell of Old Drury and King Charles II.

UNIQUE PROCESS FOR RETAINING AND REGAINING BEAUTY.

By Mlle. Charlotte Sirier.

Does your skin chap or roughen easily, or become unduly red or blotchy? Let me tell you a quick and easy way to overcome the trouble and keep your complexion beautifully white, smooth and soft. Just get some ordinary mercolised wax at the chemists, and use a little before retiring as you would use cold cream. The wax, through some peculiar action, flecks off the rough discoloured or blemished skin. The worn out cuticle comes off just like dandruff on a diseased scalp only in almost invisible particles. Mercolised wax simply hastens Nature's work, which is the rational and proper way to attain a perfect complexion, so much sought after, but very seldom seen. The process is perfectly simple and quite harmless.

* * * * *

It is astounding the number of women who suffer from unsightly growths of hair on the face, and it will come as a piece of good news to know that there is a simple substance known as powdered pheminol which will remove it immediately and permanently. Mix a small quantity into a thin paste with a little water, and apply to the objectionable growths. In two minutes all trace of the hair will have entirely vanished, and your skin will be as soft and smooth as a child's.

* * * * *

The hair should be allowed to breathe, and the greasy film around each strand must be removed with a mild non-alkaline shampoo. Soaps should be tabooed. The very best solution for the purpose can be made by dissolving a teasponful of tallax granules in a cup of hot water. It stimulates the scalp to healthy action, and at the same time leaves the hair in that soft, fluffy condition so much admired. Any chemist can supply you with an original packet of stallax, sufficient to make twenty-five or thirty shampoos.

* * * * *

One need not resort to the very questionable expedient of hair-dye in order not to have grey hair. The grey hair can easily be changed back to a natural colour in a few days' time merely by the application of a simple, old-fashioned and perfectly harmless home-made lotion. Procure from your chemist two ounces of tammalite concentrate, and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply this to the hair a few times with a small sponge and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing your grey hair gradually darkening to the desired shade. The lotion is pleasant, not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way.

PARKER BELMONT'S CLYNOL BERRIES FOR OBESITY.—[ADVT.]

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SUNLIGHT SOAP

IN HOME WATERS.

WORDS could not express more perfectly all that is told in this picture. Neither can words fully convey the nation's gratitude to our gallant navy. Therefore, we leave our illustration to express all we would say of Jack, of his good wife, bonny son and happy home. Likewise we think that the Quality and Efficiency of SUNLIGHT SOAP with the satisfaction and leisure they bring are also best expressed in this illustration of

SUNLIGHT IN HOME WATERS.

£1,000 GUARANTEE OF PURITY ON EVERY BAR

The name Lever on Soap is a Guarantee of Purity and Excellence.

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Why don't you use Tatcho too?

TATCHO

The HAIR GROWER

WHY fret and worry about loss of hair when you simply have to walk into the nearest Chemist's or Stores and ask for Tatcho? You ***cannot*** use Tatcho and not benefit. Every application will effect improvement. Under its beneficent influence your hair will acquire healthy vigour and increase in volume day by day. Always remember your Chemist or Stores will be glad to supply you with Tatcho, because Tatcho is genuine. The name "Tatcho" literally means "genuine," "good," "true." And that's what Tatcho is.

Tatcho is a spirituous preparation, the colour of whiskv, free from all grease and smell, It is supplied in bottles at **1/-** *and* **2/9.**

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Nature's Mysterious Force, Performing New Wonders

TAKE electricity if you want to get well. It's a lot easier to take than drugs, and it cures where drugs don't.

People used to think that the right way to cure pain or illness of any kind was to swallow a lot of drugs. That was just a habit. Now almost everyone knows that drugs are only poison. To cure anything you must help Nature. Drugs don't do that. Nature will cure when she has the power. That power is electricity. Drugs work against Nature.

You take a drug to stop pain and it can only stop it by stupefying the nerves. When the stupor passes off, the pain comes back and you have to take the drug again. Every dose weakens your nerves. If your stomach fails to work properly from lack of strength, you force it to act by powerful stimulants. That ruins your stomach in a short time. The same applies to all other organs.

Electricity gives nourishment, strength, to your body. If your stomach is weak, give it electricity, which will enable it to do its work properly. If you have a pain, remove it for ever by giving electricity to the part that causes the pain. If your nerves are weak, give them electricity, which is nerve food, nerve life. No pain or weakness can resist electricity.

The "Ajax" Battery does this. It saturates the nerves with electric life, and they carry the force to every organ and tissue of the body, giving health and strength to every part. It is a body battery (not an electric belt) and never needs charging, for it makes it own power.

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THE LITTLE TYPEWRITER AS FLAT AS A POCKET-BOOK
For Trenches, Home or Travel.
NO LARGER THAN THE HAND. GOES IN COAT POCKET. WEIGHS ONLY ONE POUND. SIMPLE IN CONSTRUCTION. EASY TO LEARN. ELEGANT WRITING. 75 CHARACTERS (STEEL TYPE). INVALUABLE TO ARMY OFFICERS. THOUSANDS SOLD. GUARANTEED.
Price £3 5s., or with Commercial Carriage and Support (taking foolscap paper), £4 10s. Packing & postage, Inland, 1/-; Foreign, 2/- extra.
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No more misery. Get rid of the drink habit in 3 days.

After being a heavy drinker for years, I **was saved** and providentially came into possession of the true method for overcoming **inebriety**. The drinker who wants to **stop for ever**, getting rid of the awful desire for alcohol, can easily do so, losing no time and enjoying life better than ever before. **Marvellous Success.** Safe, reliable, medically endorsed.

Drinkers Secretly Saved.

If a person is **addicted** so strongly that he has lost desire to be rescued, he can be treated **secretly**; will become disgusted with odour and taste of liquor. Legions of **testimonials** verifying genuineness of my Method. **Joyous news** for drinkers and for **wives, mothers,** etc., contained in my **Book.** Sent, plain wrapper, **free.** Keep this advt. or pass it on. **Address:**
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It will invigorate your whole system, and enable you to enjoy robust health
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It should be used in all anæmic conditions, nervous breakdown, and to overcome the weakening after-effects of severe illness and colds.

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A Torquay Doctor writes:—"I have found Dr. HOMMEL'S Hæmatogen most valuable in cases of low vitality and anæmia."

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"Tales of a Toffee Tin."

Amongst the youngsters:

This is the tin that arrived at school in the hamper from home,

and if he wanted the tin to last longer he shouldn't have asked for Mackintosh's.

That's all there is of this "Tale of a Toffee Tin." All tales about Toffee are inevitably short—if it's Mackintosh's Toffee-de-Luxe.

All children love Mackintosh's, if they have lived long enough to experience its delicious buttery, sugary, creamy flavour. This wonderful sweetmeat is liked also by most grown-ups—of the kind who still can smile, and are not afraid to show an appreciation of a simple, homely sweetmeat.

Many thousands of odd moments every day of the year are wisely occupied in munching Mackintosh's—*wisely* because Toffee-de-Luxe is full of food and contains compressed nutriment in every atom of it.

In every bite a delight; and in every atom the goodness, purity, and food value of sugar, butter, and thick rich cream.

It is simply a duty to treat our Soldiers and Sailors to lots and lots of Mackintosh's Toffee-de-Luxe.

Sold loose by weight, and in fancy tins, by confectioners everywhere, 1½d. per oz.

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HIGH - GRADE SECOND-HAND FURNITURE

£50,000 worth of stock. For cash or on easy terms. Good as new—yet half cost. Double wear of cheap new goods.

Jelks' furniture comes solely from good-class homes throughout the Kingdom. An ever-changing stock of absorbing interest. Call or write at once.

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SULPHOLINE

This famous lotion quickly removes Skin Eruptions, ensuring a clear complexion. The slightest rash, faintest spot, irritable pimples, disfiguring blotches, obstinate eczema, disappear by applying SULPHOLINE, which renders the skin spotless, soft, clear, supple, comfortable. For 42 years it has been the remedy for

Eruptions	Roughness	Acne
Pimples	Rashes	Blotches
Redness	Eczema	Spots
Psoriasis	Scurf	Rosea

Sulpholine is prepared by the great Skin Specialists, J. PEPPER & Co. Ltd., 7 Bedford Laboratories, London, S.E., and is sold in bottles at 1/3 and 3/-. It can be obtained direct from them by post or from any Chemists and Stores throughout the world.

Quickly removes the effects of Sunscorch.

DON'T LOOK OLD!

But restore your grey and faded hairs to their natural colour with LOCKYER'S SULPHUR HAIR RESTORER

1/9 Sold Everywhere. 1/9

Lockyer's restores the natural colour, cleanses the scalp, and makes the most perfect Hair Dressing. Prepared by J. PEPPER & Co. Ltd., 7 Bedford Laboratories, London, S.E. Obtainable by post, or any Chemists or Stores throughout the World.

The Sphere Garter

As popular afloat as ashore

Always serviceable and comfortable

"Glad they've sent these 'Sphere' Garters, too!"

With Cord or Pad, 1/- to 3/-

From all Outfitters, or

SPHERE SUSPENDER CO., LEICESTER.

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"He always admires my beautiful hair"

THOUSANDS of women whose hair is the envy and admiration of their friends, attribute their profusion of hair to the simple, scientific, inimitable remedy Tatcho, the discovery of Mr. Geo. R. Sims, the celebrated author and philanthropist.

Well-known Society people, whose names and ranks carry conviction, have written their grateful thanks to the Company founded under Mr. Geo. R. Sims' auspices. If your hair is coming out in the comb, if it is brittle, if it lacks lustre, these are the ways that Nature warns you to begin a course with Tatcho.

Tatcho strengthens the hair at the moment that it needs it most. The scalp becomes fresh and healthy and you have to look for the stray hair in the comb and brush instead of bewailing the number that you find there.

TATCHO

The HAIR GROWER

Tatcho is sold by Chemists and Stores all over the world in bottles at 1s. and 2s. 9d., each bottle bearing the following guarantee :—

"I guarantee that this Preparation is made according to the Formula recommended by me."

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A delightfully fragrant and delicious beverage, identical in every respect with the true French Café au Lait, but far easier, quicker, and cheaper to prepare.

You make it *as* you want it, *when* you want it, *how* you want it, without an atom of waste.

MILKMAID
Café au Lait
KAFFAY-O-LAY

The most economical Coffee you can buy. Saves the cost of both milk and sugar—only boiling water needed.

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Insist always on Milkmaid Café au Lait and refuse worthless substitutes.

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